NEITHER CHRISTIAN NOR HEATHEN ; ISLAM AMONG THE AFRICAN SLAVES IN THE AMERICAS

By: Dr. George H. Junne, Jr.
University of Northern Colorado
March 1995

Muslims can be found from Africa (278,250,800) through all of Asia (636,976,000). In the New World, the United States has 10.000.000 adherents while in the Caribbean, there are at least 400,000 Muslims. Suriname itself has 100,000 believers (almost 25%), Trinidad and Tobago another 100,000, Venezuela 50,000, and Guyana 120,000. The remainder may be found in Barbados, Grenada, Dominica, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Jamaica.[1] In some New World countries, it was the Africans who introduced Islam.

When many historians analyze African and African American religions, they usually concentrate on indigenous African religions and the conversion of Africans in America to Christianity. Included in the discussion is the estabishment and development of the Black church in Amierca. Themes usually not mentioned are (1) a few Africans were already Christians before their capture, (2) some Africans retained their indigenous religious beliefs in whole or in part, and (3) a significant number of Africans were Muslims. Even scholarly works such as *The Muslims of America*, edited by Yvonne Haddad, exclude any reference to early Muslims from Africa in its historical references. *Islam in North America: A Sourcebook,* edited by Michael A.Koszegi and J. Gordon Melton, provides a short bibliography and other minimal historical information though it does acknowledge early contributions of Africans. Likewise, Akbar Muhammad's article "Muslims in the United States: History, Religion, Politics and Ethnicity" claims that the foundation of the American Muslim community was the work of European American hummanists and social and religious malcontents. Further, he maintained that African Americans were merely the religious successors of those earlier whites. [2]

There is a historical union between Islam and Africans. According to Islamic tradition and Ibn Ishaq, a biographer of Muhammad, it was an Ethiopian named Bilal Ibn Rabah who first called the Muslims to prayer. Born in Mecca, Bilal was one of the initial converts to Islam, preached in 1610 by a local merchant of Mecca named Muhammad the Prophet. In 622 during the *Hijra*, the emigration of Muhammad and his followers from Mecca to Medina, Bilal accompanied the Prophat over

1. Larry Luxner, "Muslims in the Caribbean," *Aramco World 38* (September-December 1987): 3.
2. Akber Muhammad, "Muslims in the United States: History, Religion , Politics and Ethnicity, "*Journal Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* 12:2 (July 1991) : 439.

the next decade as macebearer, steward, and as his muezzin. There is some confusion over Bilal's history after the Prophet's death in 632, but it seems he may have accompanied Muslim armies to Syria where he may have died between 638 and 642.

> Bilal's finest hour came in January, 630, on an occasion regarded as one of the most hallowed moments in Islamic history. After the Muslim forces had captured Makkah [Mecca], the Prophet's muezzin ascended to the top of the ba to call the belivers to prayer—the first time the call to prayer was heard within Islam's holiest city. 3

One historian who has addressed early African Muslims in America is Allan D. Austin in his excellent book, *African Muslims in Antebllum America*. However, Muslim African slaves in the New World is largely an invisible history. Fortunately, the names of some Muslim slaves have been recorded and others are beginning to emerge. They include Salih Bilali of Macina (fl. 1770-1841), Ayuba Suleiman of Bondo (ca. 1701 - 1773), Abd Al-Rahman of Futa Djalon (1762-1829), Omar Ibn Said from Futa Toro (fl. 1770-1864), Lamine Kebe of Futa Djalon (fl. 1775-1835), Jamaican slave Abu Bakr Al Siddiq of Timbuktu (fl. 1790-1841), Bilali of Futa Djalon (fl. 1814-1859), and Muhammad Gardo Baquaqua of Borgu (fl. 1820's-1850), a Brazilian slave and American college student. 4

The spread of Islam to Africa is well documented but much of the literature focuses on the Maghreb and not the sub-Sahara region. 5 In West Africa where a great number of African slaves came from, Islam met with varied success. It is quite clear that a significant number of West Africans were Muslim, though.

> The story of the penetration of Islam into Black Africa, south of the Sahare, also awaits a connected and comprehensive treatment. In East Africa it seems that Islam was able to make little headway primarily beacuse of the slave trade, but as soon as slavery was banned Muslim missions became active in the interior. In West Africa, again, the active period of Islam through various *jihad* movements occurred during the nineteenth century. One outstanding characteristic of the spread of Islam into Africa has been the combination of Sufi missions with the orthodox concept of

3. Barry Hoberman, "The First Muezzin," *Aramco World* 34 (July-August 1983: 3.
4. Randall M. Miller and John David Smith, eds., *Dictionary of Afro-American Slavery* (New York: Green wood Press, 1988), 370-371.
5. The Maghreb is the western part of the world of Islam, comprising the countries of Algeria, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia. When the Muslims held Spain, it was also considered part of the Maghreb.

jihad, possibly beacuse of the tribal organization of African society. 6

Islam (surrender) around the globe has retained in essence the central concepts of "a sacred way of life, representing Gad's final revelation to His prophet Muhammad, which was recorded in the Koran." For Muslims (those who surrender themselves) Islam is "the Way," beacuse it "provides theories and practices by which indivduals and societies may obtain salvation."

African Muslims, like Muslims everywhere, attempt to abey the following specific rules (the pillars) as a function of their faith: bear witness to the belief that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His prophet, pray five times a day, the first time just before dawn , observe fasts and other forms of abstinence during the month of Ramadan; give alms; and make the pilgrimage to Mecca. In addition, good Muslims must follow specific calendar (lunar) rites and observances; observe certain taboos and prescriptions; use Islamic elements in such rites of passage as naming; acknowledge the efficacy of Islamic supernatural powers of saints and holy persons; and use holy war (jihad) to spread the faith, if necessary.7

Islam had a major effect on the status of women in sub-Saharan Africa. In many of the traditional African societies men had a higher status than women, but women actively particpated in many aspects of society. One of their roles was that of medium, the person who was the connection the spiritual and the human worlds. Islam would have both positive and negative affects, depending on one's perspectives.

Conversion meant following Islamic law and practices, including switching from the matrilineal to the Muslim partilineal system. As a consequence, women converts lost the sociopolitical power they had held in their matrilineal societies. In particular, the Islamic practice of purdah, or seclusion, sharpened the gender restrictions on women. However, Islam provided certain compensations, such as legal rights in marriage and divorce, protection against enslavement, and the recommendation of freedom for slave women who bore their owner's children. 8

---

6. Fazlur Rahman, Islam, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 8. "The Qur'an calls upon believers to undertake jihad, which is to surrender your properties and yourselves in the path of Allah; the purpose of which in turn is to establish prayer, give zakat [welfare tax], command good and forbid evil'—i.e., to establish the Islamic socio-moral order," p.37.

7. Ali A. Mazrui, ed., *The Africans*: A Reader (New York: Praeger, 1986), 65.

8. Michael L. Conniff and Thomas J. Davis, *Africans in the Americas: A History of the black Diaspora* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 24.

Sufism was inaugurated in Persia and Iraq during the eighth and ninth centuries "as an ecstatic method of realizing the spirituality of Islam." A division had developed in Islam between the theologians and legists and "those who gave to religion a more personal basis in religious devotion." It was a reaction against the perceived impersonal legal aspects of Islam that led to Sufism. A fundamental tenet is belief in the Mahdi, God's guided one " who will appear at the end of time and restore the supremacy of justice and Islam over ungodly forces. " 9 Sufism was able to "compromise with the popular beliefs and practices of the half-converted and even nominally converted masses."

...Sufism proved the greatest channel for the spread of Islam precisely by virtue of the same compromise. In India. Central Asia. Turkey and Africa. it brought millions within the fold of Islam with astonishing rapidity and is still a proselytizing force in Africa. 10

The Sufi merchants and other Fulbe and Mende merchants, acting as amateur missionaries, carried the less-accepted Muslim doctrines from the northern fringes of the Sahara to West Africa. Beacuse of the lack of Muslim clerics in many areas, hundreds of brotherhoods formed around particular religious leaders who articulated their personal relationship with God to their followers. 11

While Christianity demanded that converts completely divorce themselves from their former practices, Islam, at least under the Sufis, left room for adaptation to the Africa milieu. There are a number of Sufi orders in the world. In "Negro Africa" one could see "variations with regard to political attitude and whether a particular order is militant or peace-loving." 12

Through popular Sufism. Berber and African animistic beliefs and rituals have imposed their own form on Islam in Africa: the 'marabout' (murabit) of the Berbers. the 'holy man' or 'religious leader' (the alfa) of the Negro Muslim is essentailly a carry-over from the pre-Ialamic cults of holy men and witch doctors of Negro fetishism. 13

There are other specific examples where Islam and indigenous beliefs have combined to give Islam an African flavor.

Throughout Africa. belief in Allah has coalesced with the creator-God of African cosmologies: but often the Afican name for God is used interchangeably with *Allah*. The Mossi use Allah along with *Winnam*, and the Swahili of East Africa use *Allah* and *Mungu* as synonyms. Sudsidiary supernatural powers in

---

9. Rahman. *Islam*, 129-131. 10. Ibid., 155.

11. Bohannan and Curtin, *Africa and Africans*, 318. 12. Ranman, Islam, 157.

13. Ibid., 163. Marabouts were traveling Muslim scholars who were also traders.

indigenous African religions also have tended to be Islamized according to Koranic principles. Good spirits are equated with angels and the evil ones with jinn (a group of evil spirits). Muslim clerics. who are persons endowed with mystical power. divine the sources of evil and seek to exorcise it using verses of the Koran. 14

Three major West African savanna kingdoms were Ghana, Mali, and Songhai. Islam reached Ghana by the ninth century through trade routes, reflecting the Islamization process occurring in Spain and Portugal. Among the first West African converts were the Wolofs, converted by Arab merchants. Both the Mende trades from Mali and the Fulbe won converts by example as they searched for markets in West Africa. The expansion of the empires of Mali and Songhay spread Islam in the Senegambia region. Mali eclipsed Ghana about 1235 and in turn was conquered by Songhai in the 16th century. One of Songhai's most famous Muslim rulers was Askia Muhammad who transformed Timbuktu, the celebrated center of Muslim and Arabic studies, into an intellectual paradise of 100,000 residents. Askia ascended the throne in 1493 and turned his kingdom into probably the largest and most powerful one in the known world. 15

> The towering minarets of two great mosques dominated the face of the city. From the Great Mosque. flat-roofed houses (of wood and plaster) radiated in all directions. The older Sankore. was the center of intellectual life....
>
> In the narrow streets of this Sudanese metropolis. scholars mingled with rich black merchants and young boys sat in the shade. reciting the Koran. Youths from all over the Moslem world came to Timbuktu to study law and surgery at the University of Sanjore: scholars came from North Africa and Europe to confer with the learned historians and writers of the black empire. 16

By the 1700's Islam was established throughout West Africa from Senegal on the Atlantic Ocean eastward 2,000 miles to Chad and Cameroon. It also expanded into upper Guinea and the upper Ivory Coast. Mende merchants carrying on the salt and gold trade in Guinea were responsible for spreading Islam in that area. The Mende needed slaves to carry the gold north and the salt south. After conversion to

---

14. Mazrui, *The Africans*, 66.

15. Conniff and Davis, *Africans in the Americas*, 27; and Clyde-Ahmad Winters, "A Survey of Islam and the African Diaspora," *Pan-African Journal* 8 (1975): 426.

16. Lerone Bennett, jr., Before the Mayflower: A *History of Black America*, 5th edition (New York: Benguin books, 1961), 18.

Islam, many of those slaves were manumitted and when they returned home, they spread Islam to their communities. Islam infiltrated many African tribes almost completely; it influenced those who only resided in the cities or who comprised certain classes.

> Muslim influence was dominant or substantial (from east to west) the Wolof and Tokolor. the sedentary Fulbe (or Fulani). various Mand-speakers (the Soninke. Dyula. and Mandinka). certain Niger River peoples. and many of the Hausa and Kanuri. 17

The Fulbe dwelt on the Senegal River from Senegal to the northern Cameroon and were among the first West Africans to Takruri accept Islam. They originated near Futa Toro on the middle Senegal River an area that supported an agricultural society, and spoke the fula language. In Arabic means Negro Muslim, after the Arabic word for Futa Toro. Though primarily sedentary except when periodic weather changes forced them to migrate, some of the Fulbe were Muslim clerics who traveled as "literates, merchants, and makers of charms." Many of them "settled down away from home to become a permanent community of Muslim teachers living in an alien society." 18

One of the early European travelers to Africa who recorded encounters with Muslims was Mungo Park of Scotland. Born in 1771, Park set out in May 1795 to explore the course of the Niger for the Association for Promoting Discoveries in the Interior of Africa. He returned home to Yarrow from that voyage on Christmas Day, 1797, and wrote a book about his travels. In 1804 he undertook a second expedition to Africa where reports of his death reached his home in

---

17. Miller and Smith, *Dictionary of Afro-American Slavery*, 370. The Wolof (Gelofe or Galofo) were an ethnic African Muslim group from Senegal who became enslaved in Peru and the Caribbean. Planters believed them to have a dangerous influence beacuse of their insubordination and tendecy to run away. The Fulbe was both an ethnic group and a West African kingdom. Many Fulbe were enslaved in the new World. The Fulah (Fulani), a pastoral West African group, were Muslims. Those Sudanese people with straight hair, light-skinned faces, and prominent noses, had physical traits resembling those of Europeans. Many were carried to Brazil where at the beginning of the nineteenth century, they were leaders in revolts against planters and governments. Many of those people were well-educated, worked in iron, very knowledgeable in cattle-raising, were priests, school teachers, and political workers. according to Benjamin Nunez, according to Nunez, Dictionary of Afro-Latin American Civilization, 200-201, and 207; and Winters, "A Survey of Islam," 427.

18. Bohannan and Curtin, *Africa and Africans*, 320-322.

1806.[19] He described four groups he came across in the Gambia region.

> The natives of the countries bordering on the Gambia, though distributed into a great many distinct governments, may, I think, be divided into four great classes; the Feloops, the Jaloffs [Wolofs], the Fulahs, and the Mandingos. Among all these nations, the religion of Mahomet has made, and continues to make, considerable progress; but in most of them, the body of the people, both free and enslaved, persevere in maintaining the blind but harmless superstitions of their ancestors, and are called by the Mahomedans kafirs, or infidels. 20

Though it is obvious that Park is somewhat ethnocentric and "there were not yet tools shaped for the study of unfamiliar societies," he still made some insightful observations. He noted that although Islam had made successful inroads, many of the people still practiced their former religions. Another obsevation was that Islam greatly influenced the governental system of the Mandingos.

> As the Negroes have no written language of their own, the general rule of decision is an appeal to *ancient custom;* but since the system of Mahomet has made so great progress among them, the converts to that faith have gradually introduced, with the religious tenets, many of the civil institutions of the Prophet; and where the Koran is not found sufficiently explicit, recourse is had to a commentary called *Al Sharra,* containing, as I was told, a complete exposition or digest of the Mahomedan laws, both civil and criminal, properly arranged and illustrated. 21

The Mandingos were the most numerous and powerful tribe in Senegambia, and were the first to meet the Portuguese in the 15th century. The Mandingos, the Fulbe, and the Susu were Muslims and by the time of European contact, had migrated toward and almost surrounded the non-Muslim groups in the Futa Djalon area of Upper Guinea to Sierra Leone. Beacuse the Koran allowed Muslims to make war on non-believers. Black Muslim traders "followed a custom of general acquisitiveness stimulated by European lobor demands." "Pagans" were the first victims of the slave trade and included the Wolofs and the Djolas. Slaves were sold to Muslim traders who were also religious proselytizers. Some of the traders were mulattos of Mandingo and Portughese extraction. 22

---

19. Mungo Park, *The Travels of Mungo Park* (London, England: E.P.Dutton and Company, 1907), vii-ix.
20. Ibid., 11.
21. Ibid., 13. Al Sharra (Shari'a), the divinely ordained pattern of human conduct, is based on the belief that Moslem law is inherently and essentially religious.
22. Walter Rodney, "Upper Guinea and the Significance of the Origins of Africans Enslaved in the New World," *The Journal of Negro History* 54 (October 1969): 333. The Mandingas, enslaved in the West Indies and Brazil, were tall, hardy, and favored for domestic work. They were known for their tendency toward group suicide to escape slavery, according to Nunez, *Dictionary of Afro-Latin American Civilization,* 296.

The Mandingos were observed to be literate–able to read and write Arabic as well as transcribe their language into Arabic. They farmed and raised animals (but not pigs), and engaged in commerce, including that associated with long-distance voyages. Consistent with Islamic law they also drank no alcohol and fasted during the month of Ramadan. The men were circumcised and the women received clitoridectomies.23

The Muslim Mandingo was revered among all the peoples of Upper Guinea as a dispenser of spiritual protection in the form of amulets and Koranic inscriptions. Any marabou (African priest) who was unfortunate enough to have found himself in captivity in Spanish America would certaion, a Muslim in Upper Guinea was called "Bookman" by English traders in the eighteenth century. It is intriguing to note it's the name of the African "priest" who masterminded the outbreak of the great revolution in Saint Domingue in 1789, having arrived there via Jamaica. 24

Also caught up in the net were Patcharis of the Middle Gambia Valley, the Baasris in the Upper Valley, and the Bambaras. Later, Muslims were also enslaved for petty and major crimes. Though Islam dominated them in the 11th century, it was not until 18th century that Wolof leaders finally acquiesced. Still, the populace maintained thier teaditional beliefs. The Djolas not only attempted to resist Mandingo dominance and Islam, but also refused to participate in the Atlantic slave trade. Beacuse they were not able to protect themselves, thousands of them were enslaved. Another group of the Gambia, the Fulbe, were also Muslims and by the 16th century were also Mandingo vassals, sometimes joining the Mandingos to capture slaves. Many of them avoided being sold into slavery because of the protection of the Mandingos. The Seraculeh, a northern branch of the Mandingos, also lived in Senegambia and engaged in slavery in the Upper River Division of the Gambia Valley.

Rulers and elites perpetrated the trade against the general population, often whether Islam was professed or not. Occasionally mistakes were made and a noble would be enslaved, as in the case of Job ben Solomon. He was a wealthy Fula of the Gambia region who crossed the river with a coffle of slaves that he intended to sell for his father. Ben Solomon was caught by Mandingo merchants and sold to a Captain Pike of the ship Arabella, the same person with whom ben Solomon had bartered for his slaves, although the two could not agree on a price.... Europeans made every effort to rectify such situations before the Middle Passage, if a local nobleman inadvertently fell into their hands. Fear of retaliation on the part of the black elite and a desire to protect trading interests dictated this policy. Thus while Djolas, Wolofs, and smaller non-Moslem groups figured most heavily in the

23. Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisana: The Development of Afro-Creole culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Baton Rouge: Louisian State University Press, 1992), 38-39.

24. Rodney, "Upper Guinca and the Significance of the Origins of Africans," 336.

Senegambia slave trade during the eighteenth century, all of the major tribes of the region were represented in the slave marts. 25

Extensive European contact with Africans began in the eighth century, before the modern slave trade era. The initial invasion of Eruope in 711 saw Muslims—those Arab, North African Berbers, and other African allies generally referred to as Moors—conquering Spain, Portugal, southern France, southern Italy, and the Balkans. Crossing the Straits of Gibraltar, they defeated the Visigoths and arrived at the Pyrenees where they established their empire. The center of that Hispano-Muslim empire was the city of Cordoba. The reconquest of Spain began as early as 722 with Don Pelayo but it would not be finalized for almost 800 years. Charles Martel (Charles the Hammer), Frankish ruler and the grandfather of Charlemagne, actually checked the invasion's spread at the Battle of Tours-Poitiers in 732. After the Moorish invasion of Spain, sub-Saharan African Blacks, Arabs, Berbers, Slave, and Spanish Christians were enslaved there, as Spain launched its golden age. 26

> This civilization was built upon the assimilation of the Spanish and Berber population to Arabic and Islamic culture and was fostered by extraordinary economic prosperity. Muslim Spain bears an aura of glory. The great mosque of Cordova, the gardens, fountains and courtyards of the Alhambra, the muwashshahat and zajal poetry with their Arabic verses and occasional romance language refrains, the irrigated gardens of Seville and Valencia, the wisdom of philosophy and science—these are the monuments of Spanish Islam. Spain was the focal point for the transmission of Greek philosophy from the Arab world to Europe. 27

The Spanish continued to import Black slaves into Spain after 1492, especially to Seville and the province of Andalusia, into the fifteenth century. Because Spanish authorities were worried about "the control of heresy and purity in the Indian population" of the New World, it expanded its older Castilian slave legislation to that region. At first, Spain wanted only to admit *ladinos,* or Spanish-speaking Christians into the Indies and not *bozales,* "raw" Blacks directly from Africa. A bozal was purchased in Africa and sold in sold in the Spanish colonies

---

25. Margaret Washington Creel, *"A Peculiar People": Slave Religion and Community-Culture Among the Gullahs* (New York: New York University Prees, 1988), 38-40 .
26. Conniff and Davis, *Africans in the Americas,* 16-17; and Manuel Marzal, "Transplanted Spanish Catholicism," in *South and Meso-American Native Spirituality:* From the Cult of the Feathered serpent to the Theology of Liberation , ed . Gary H . Gossen , 140 - 169 (New York : Crossroad , 1993) , 143 .
27. Ira M . Lapidus , *A history of Islamic Societies* (New York : Cambridge University Press, 1988), 378.

of the New World. The Spanish abandoned this policy for safety and economic reasons in 1510.

> Finding the ladinos difficult to control and expensive, the crown reevaluated its attitude and concluded that the bozales were at the same primitive, pre-Christian, religious state as the New World Indians, and therefore were not in danger of religiously polluting the Indies. 28

Because of the heavy demand for Negroes in the New World, the Spanish were forced to compromise their position on the ban on *bozales*. There was one ban on which they did not compromise, however—the ban on Muslims. One of the fears centered on the belief that Islam would spread from the Africans to the Christianzed Indians.29 In 1492 Spain finally defeated a 700 year-old Muslim state in Europe and some of the Christian Spanish soldiers in the New World had fought against Islam.

> The attitude of the Spanish colonizer confronting the primitive and savage life of America brings to mind memories of the Reconquest. It may be said unequivocally that the image of al-Andalus engraved on the retina of the *reconquistador* once again appeared in the eyes of the *conquistador* of the New World. 30

There seems to have been an even more overriding reason to ban Muslims from the New World based on religious conflict. In Spain between 711 and 1492 Christians and Muslims lived through some dramatic periods of both military and religious antagonism, and both saw it as a holy war. The Muslim invasion of Spain had interfered with the developing close association between church and state that had its roots in the creation of the Holy Roman Empire and the coronation of Charlemagne in 800. The reconquest carried "the pattern of church/state to its ultimate extreme" because of Spain's felt need "to strengthen the political and religious unity of the newborn national state...." Thus, in June 1492, between 150,000 to 200,000 Jews were expelled from Spain because of their perceived danger to Catholicism by possible perversion through a "wicked faith." Muslims suffered a different fate.

In 1499 Cardinal Cisneros, archbishop of Granada forced Mozarabs,

---

28. Herbert S. :Klein, *Slavery in the Americas: A Comparative Study of Virginia and Cuba* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1967), 65-67.
29. Colin A Palmer, *Slaves of the White God: Blacks in Mexico*, 1570-1650 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 7.
30. Rafael Guevara Bazan, "Muslim Immigration to Spanish America," *The Muslim World* 56 (July 1966): 173.

those who practiced Islam in Muslim Spain, to convert to Catholicism. After baptism they were known as Moriscos and it was suspected that many of them still maintained a fundamental belief in Islam. With harsher policies enacted, there were Moorish rebellions in Spain such as one in Alpujarra in 1568. Between 1609 and 1613 all Muslims, perhaps 300,000, were ordered to be expelled from Spain. Though the question of conversion may have been the main cause for this, there was also the fear that Turks might have supported a Muslim uprising. 31 Attitudes and beliefs held by Spanish Christians would help to shape attitudes concerning the role of Muslims in the New World.

Spanish Franciscans believed the end of the world was imminent and even Columbus believed it would occur by the mid-1600's Some Spaniards believed that God gave Spain the task of saving the world for Christianity before the apocalypse. That salvation was to have been a triumph over Judaism and Islam specifically. The goal of Columbus' voyages and those of other Spanish explorers was "winning the worldwide religious and political hegemony of Christendom, there by preparing the world for the anticipated drama of the End Time." Columbus and other believed that only with the completion of his first voyage could the Gospel be preached to the nations across the seas and the heathens be converted. The defeat of the Muslims in Spain was not the end of the Christian-Islamic holy war, but the beginning of a final crusade. Spain, with God's help, had already defeated Islam in one part of the Mediterranean and would soon, hopefully, defeat it on the eastern side. The next step would be the liberation of Christianity's Holy City Jerusalem for the Church, plying political power in the service of God. Transporting Muslims to the New World would be antithetical to those goals.

> ...Jeruslem and New Spain were not unrelated geographical territories. but united in one eschatological drama. designed by God and enacted by Spain. 32

The close link between church and state was expressed in the *Patronato Regio,* in which Spain assumed some functions of the Church in the late 1400's. The Spanish empire was therefore a missionary enterprise. The *Patronato Regio* evolved into the *Regio Vicariato Indio* in the 18th century, where by the king of Spain was

31. Marzal, "Transplanted Spainsh Catholicism," 144-145.

32. Roger A. Johnson, :Inter-Religous Conflict and the Voyages of Columbus," *The Muslim* World 83 (January 1993): 1-4, 15.

converted into a de facto vicar of Rome in the Indies. 33 In spite of the laws Spain enacted, "some Muslims, whose numbers it is impossible to establish, succeeded in entering surreptitiously the new continent as slaves, merchants or sailors." Many of those immigrants wanted to freely practice their faith in the New World. Some were able to do that more or less in the Caribbean colonies. 34 In 1518, one Spanish document stipulated that if Muslim Africans converted Indians, the Africans were to be enslaved. However, Indians were not to be enslaved even if they converted to Islam. 35 This was one of the earliest confirmations that Africans were disseminating Islam to the indigenous Indian populations of the Caribbean and Central and South America. Both the crown and the church expressed "Islamophobia."

> Civil and ecclesiastical authorities were fiercely opposed in particular to sexual unions between Africans and Indians. The Church feared that the African would reinforce the Indian's attachment to paganism, and perhaps even infect him with the infidelity of Islam. 36

Whether the Muslim was Black or white, in 1531 Spain forbade their importation to the Indies, in 1532 they were barred from Puerto Rico, and in 1543, Charles V expelled all Berbers and Moors from all overseas Spanish territories. The Spaniards believed that the Muslims were spreading Islam to the indigenous population and there is some evidence that it happened to some extent. In the eyes of the Spainsh, Moors, Berbers, Arabs, and Moriscos constituted a "religios race" that was "closely bound to the faith of Muhammad." 37 The 1531 law

---

33. Marzal, "Transplanted Spanish Catholicism," 145.
34. Bazan, "Muslim Immigration to Spanish America," 175.
35. Clyde-Ahmad Winters, "Afro-American Muslims—From Slavery to Freedom, " *Islamic Studies*, 188-189. A letter from King Philip II to Martin Enriquez, dated July 4, 1570, upheld the policy concerning Indian converts to Islam. The following passage is from Bazan, "Muslim Immigration to Spanish America," 186.

> Also you have asked us to be aware that there are Moors in that land (island) who come to buy and sell and who impede the preaching of the Holy Gospel and give you concern. we authorize you to make slaves of such Moors and to confiscate their property. You are advised that if such Moors are Moors by nationality and by birth, and have come to teach their Muslim faith (secta), or to war against you or the Indians who are subject to us or in our royal service, you have the power to make them slaves. But those who are Indians and have embraced the faith (secta) of Muhammad you shall not enslave by any means whatsoever. Rather, you shall try to convert them or persuade them by good and licit means [to embrace] our holy Catholic faith.

36. Frederick P. Bowser, *The African Slave in Colonial Peru*, 1524-1650 (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1974), 283.
37. Bazan, "Muslim Immigration to Spanish America," 176-177; and Clyde-Ahmad Winters, "Islam in Early North and South America, "*Al-Ittihad* 14 (July-October 1977): 65. Moriscos were Moors converted to Christianily, not those who remained true to Islam. The term was later applied to Moors generally.

reiterated the terms given to Provincial Governor of Tierra Firme Friar Nicolas de Ovando in 1501. The concern for a Christian world is obvious.

> Since we with great solicitude are to seek the conversion of the Indians to our holy Catholic faith. and if there should be persons whose conversions to the faith is suspected—there could be some obstacle—you shall not consent to it or provide a place for Moors. Jews, heretics or abjurers or persons newly converted to our faith to go unless they be Negro slaves or other Negro slaves who have been born in the possession of our native Christian subjects. 38

As early as 1526 Spain observed the presence of rebellious *cimarrones,* on Hispaniola and elsewhere, who aided all enemies of Spain. Usually that occurred where there was an absence of ladinos. It seems that from the time of early European explorations, African Muslims were treated with caution. Even specific groups of Africans suspected of having Islamic ties and who might organize to overthrow slavery were treated judiciously. Spain's Charles V ordered Muslims to be expelled from America in 1543 and ordered those who disobeyed that law to be fined. 39

> In 1550 another *Real Cedula* prohibited the carrying of Negro slaves from Sardinia. Majorca. Minorca, and other regions of the Mediterranean becasue it was claimed they were of Moorish castes or married to Moors, even though being the caste of Guinea Negroes. 40

Challenges to Christianity could result in severe punishment for the offender. In 1560 Peru for instance, Luis Solano and Lope de la Pena were "convicted by the Holy Office of practicing and spreading Muhammadanism in Cuzco." Solano's parents were a Spaniard and a Black woman while de la Pena was "a Moor from Guadalajara." Solano was executed and de la Pena was sentenced to life imprisonment. 41 In 1565 all Wolofs, many of whom were suspected of being Muslim, were ordered out of Chile. 42 Still, Islam would be difficult if not impossible to eradicate there.

A traveler in 1845 noted that Islam was still practiced by Peruvian blacks, who

38. Ibid., 179. "Tierra Firme" were the coasts of Columbia and Venezuela.
39. Bowser, *The African Slave in Colonial Peru,* 148; and Bazan, "Muslim Immigration to Spanish America," 176. Berber and Moorish slaves were first excluded from America in 1505 because of their faith in Islam. Wolofs were prohibited for importation by a 1532 decree, but they were sold any way according to Bowser, The African Slave in Colonial Peru, 360.
40. Klein, *Slavery in America,* 67,69.
41. Bowser, *The African Slave in Colonial Peru,* 251.
42. Winters, "Islam in Early Noth and South America," 66.

also prayed to foreign gods in their original languages and modified Christianity and Christian ceremonies. They participated in the Quasimodo procession after Easter disguised as devils and giants. the latter based on African models. 43

In 1619 John Rolfe of the Virginia colony recorded the arrival of a Dutch ship with 20 "Negers" aboard. The Dutch stole the Africans from a Spanish ship. The status of those Africans was in doubt because though they were permanent slaves of the Spanish, the Spanish also baptized them as Christians. Under English law, however, a baptized or christened person could be free and treated as a free person. According to Judge A. Leon Higginbotham, Jr., English law upheld that opinion as early as 1612 and since Virginia was an English colony, it was obliged to follow that law. In a related case in 1624 Virginia, the court ruled that John Philip, a Negro, "was qualified as a free man and Christian to give testimony, becasue he had been `Christened in England 12 years since.'"44

In the opinion of many white Americans, Africans were heathens and slavery was a Christian way of saving their souls. As they saw it, those Africans participated in pagan practices during their worship cermonies, justifying their subjugation. In 1667, the Virginia assembly addressed that concept by enacting Act III. By 1706, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, New York, and New Jersey also agreed with the principles contained in Act III. According to the Act, "baptism would not affect the bondage of blacks or Indians." In part, Act III stated the following:

> ...it is enacted that baptism does not alter the condition of the person as to his bondage of freedom; masters freed from this doubt may more carefully propagate Christianity by permitting slaves to be admitted to that sacrament. 45

Christian slaveowners could baptize their slaves without fearing they would be manumitted. It became a Christian's duty to baptize slaves so that their souls could be "cleansed and whitened." The supposed religious depravity of Africans "made them legitimate targets for spiritual rehabilitation through the tender mercies of chattel slavery." Besides, Christians considered Islam to be the "supreme cabal of infidels." Now, both God and profits could be courted. 46

43. Peter Blanchard, *Slavery and Abolition in Early Eepublican Peru* (Wilmington, DE: Scholary Resources Books, 1992), 99.

44. A.Leon Higginbotham, Jr., *In the Matter of Color: Race and The Colonial Legal Process:* The Colonial Period (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 20-21.

45. Ibid.; and Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the Making of America* (New York: Collier Books, 1964). 36.

46. Bennett, Before the Mayflower, 46; and C.Eric Lincoln, *Race, Religion, and the Continuing American Dilemma* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1984), 156.

However, much of the African Islamic influence did not survive the period of slavery, and the main bearers of that tradition came through the writings of intellectuals like Edward Wilmot Blyden, a late nineteenth-century advocate of African Islam. But it was the leaders of "proto-Islamic" movements during the black urban migrations of the twentieth century who prepared the way for a much wider acceptance of Islam. 47

No one knows when the first Muslims arrived in the Americas, but it seems they definitely arrived with the early European explorers, if not earlier. Columbus' voyage itself may have been influenced by Arab scholar Al-Adrissi, an advisor to Sicily's King Roger in the 13th century. According to one historian, Columbus had in his possession aboard his a copy of Al-Adrissi's work that told of the discovery of a new continent by eight Muslim explorers. Also on board was an interpreter to read the document, an Arab "renegade" converted to Catholicism named Louis Torres. 48 Muslim tradition holds that Moors came to the New World long before Columbus, but there seems to have been few in the United States before the 1850's except for the thousands of West African slaves.

Many enslaved Muslims were highly educated and literate in Arabic. These Afro-Muslim slaves were Sunni and adhered to Maliki legal interpretation. Though they spoke diverse, mutually native unintelligible languages, they could communicate with one another by reciting prayers and sayings in Arabic.... Vigorous proselytization by Anglo-Protestant Missionaries pressured non-Christian slaves including Muslims to observe their faith convertly and fragmentarily during the nineteenth century, and few Islamic practices survive from the slave period among U.S. Blacks today. 49

For instance, some believe that there is evidence that Muslims from Spain and West Africa were in South America around the 10th century.50

Among the earliest comers was one "Istfan the Arab," a Moroccan who was a

---

47. C.Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham, NC: Duke University Prees, 1990), 389.

48. Lansine Kaba, "Americans Discover Islam through the Black Muslim Experience," in *Islam in North America: A Sourcebook*, eds. Michael A Koszegi and J.Gordon Melton (New York: Garland Publishing,1992), 25-26. According to scholar Rafael Guevara Bazan, the man who first sighted land on Columbus didn't give him enough credit nor the king money. Though the given reason may not ring true, the story of the conversion documentation may be found in Bazan's "Some Notes for a History of the Relations Between Latin America. The Arabs and Islam. *The Muslim World* 61 (October 1971): 289.

49. Imtiyaz Yusuf, "Islam in America: A Historical-Social Perpective," *Hamdard Islamicus* 4 (Winter 1989): 80.

50. Ibid.

guide to the Franciscan friar Carlos de Niza, sent in 1539 by the viceroy of New Spain to explore what is today the state of Arizona.51

Istfan was the same person historians refer to as Estevanico (Little Stephen), the early Black explorer who led the Spaniards into New Mexico and Arizona. Born in Azamore, Morocco, circa 1500, he was probably captured in 1513 when King Manoel of Portugal seized the city. He was a scout for Panfilo de Narvaez and Cabeza de Vaca and in 1538, set out in search for Cibola ("The Seven Cities of Gold") as the advance scout. Some believe that this Muslim African was killed by the by members of the Zuni Nation. 52 Other slaves who came to America in the 1520's included Senegambians who not only refused to eat pork, but who also refused to drink beer. 53 As noted by historian C.Eric Lincoln, a Black Islamic tradition was established in early America.

> Why balck Islam? First, because it was the black Muslims, the "Moors" among the Spanish conquistadors, who first introduced Islam to the New World. Second, because in the English colonies the only Muslim presnce was among the slaves imported from black Africa. Third, while there have been small enclaves of European Muslims in America for many decades, their presence has been characterized by clannishness and quietism, not by proselytism or public postures and involvement. 54

The number of Muslim slaves reportedly ranged from a few upward to 20 percent of the population on some Southerm plantations. A recent study estimated that 10 percent of enslaved West Africans sent to the United States between 1711 and 1808 were Muslim, to some degree. That would translate to approximately 30,000 Muslims and would not include those sent to the West Indies, Brazil, or other places. 55 No one knows how many Muslim slaves there were because the masters of the slaves "had no interest in recording the cultural and

---

51. Nadim Makdisi, "The Moslems of America," *The Christian Century* 34 (August 1959): 669.
52. Mary H. Cooper, "Muslims in America," CQ Researcher 3 (April 30, 1993): 369; and William Loren Katz, Black Indians: A Hidden Heritage (New York: Atheneum, 1986), 90-94.
53. Kaba, "Americans Discover Islam." 26.
54. Lincoln, *Race, Religion, and the Continuing American Dilemma,* 157.
55. Miller and Smith, *Dictionary of Afro-American Slavery,* 370; and Lincoln, *Race, Religion, and the Continuing American Dilemma,* 155. A significant number of Muslim slaves in Brazil were also from the Benin Kingdom, located in the Togo—Cameroon area. Benin flourished from the 13th through the 17th centuries, when slavery began to destroy the empire. The Benin people were skilled in iron, gold, and bronze work and were very advanced in metallurgy, according to Benjamin Nunez, Dictionary of Afro-Latin American Civilization (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1980), 68.

spiritual achievements of their chattels." [56] One researcher believes there were "several thousands" brought just to America while others believe the numbers were smaller. Yet another historian believes that 30% of Africans enslaved in America were Muslim. [57]

> The relatively small number of Muslims (we have no good count) who were brought to North America as slaves usually clung steadfastly to their distinctive and highly formalized religious practices. These often called for public displays of fidelity, such as praying to Allah five times a day and not eating any pork, one of the slave's chief sources of energy. Muslims were ridiculed and abused by masters for these practices, yet their strong traditions have carried down to our day in certain sectors of the black community. [58]

Some masters appointed their Muslim slaves drivers and farm managers, or placed them in other positions of trust. They believed, as did many West African European colonial administrators, that Muslim Black were more trustworthy and intelligent than other African people.[59] Other masters were afraid that Muslim slaves would undermine the system, a fear that was not groundless because some Muslim slaves had a reputation for rebelliousness. [60] In some instances, Islam became the catalyst for revolt and resistance in Brazil, Saint Domongue (Haiti), Suriname, and other areas of New World. Saint Domingue was an important French colony near Jamaica, a part of the French West Indies, also known as the French Antilles. It was the site of a large slave revolt in 1791. In 1835 African Muslim slaves numbering in the hundreds confronted soldiers and civilians in the streets of Salvador, the capital of state of Bahia in Brazil. The Brazilian Muslims were also called "Malês," meaning "the people of Mali." The name may have originated from the Mande Muslims of Brazil or from the Yoruba term "imale." In their practices they favor Sunni Muslims.[61]

---

56. C. Eric Lincoln, "The Muslim Mission in the Context of American Social History," in African American Religious Studies: An Inter disciplinary Anthology, ed. Gayraud Wilmore (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1989), 342.
57. M. Arif Ghayur, "Muslims in the United States: Settlers and Visitors," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 454 (March 1981): 152; and Y. N. Kly, "The African-American Muslim Minority: 1776-1900," *Journal Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* 10(January 1989): 153.
58. Leslie Howard Owens, *The Species of Property: Slave Life and Culture in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 160.
59. Miller and Smith, *Dictionary of Afro-American Slavery*, 371.
60. Eugene D. Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 29
61. Winters, "Afro-American Muslims," 188.

> In Brazil the Muslims... were known as *alufos* in Rio de Janeiro, and Malês in Bahia. They worshipped Allah or *Olorum-ulua* (a combination of the Arabic word Allah and the Yoruba word for superme being Olorum). They had mosques that often served as the houses for their Imams, the *alufas* were led by the *lessano,* who was assisted by the *ladano* or sacristan. They performed five prayers daily.... The Muslims of Bahia called this *fazer sala* (i.e., performance of salah). In Brazil the Muslims also practice Kola, the cirumcision of young childern. They observe the annual fast of *assumy* or Ramadan. 62

The Malês may have wanted to establish a caliphate in Bahia, but they needed the participation of non-Muslims in their unorthodox jihad. The Bahian uprising was at least the third major one in that region, following revolts in 1807, 1809, 1816, 1826, 1827, and 1830. 63 Though Islam may have furnished the leadership, they still needed the ethnic solidarity of other Africans in spite of their religious orientations that may have normally been considered bewitching and profane.

> Malês dominated the rebel bloc, but they were not alone. A Malê vanguard was responsible for conceiving and beginning the revolt. A second group of workmates, friends, and Malê sympathizers, became mobilized in a few hours or during the heat of battle. And people joined the insurrection on the spur of the moment: they work up to the noise in the streets, went out, looked around, figured what was going on, and participated. 64

The Hausa and Yoruba populace of Africa seemed to have been the most ardent Muslims. During the early 19th century their population expanded to outnumber the Mandingo Muslims. "Hausa" was a generic term used for slaves of various ethnic groups brought from northern Nigeria who emerged as leaders of the revolt. In Africa, Muslims penetrated Huasa lands in the 14th century and had established learning centers by the 17th century. Most of the population did not embrace Islam until the Fulani conquered them in the early 19th century, even though they were familiar with that religion much earlier. 65

The Yorubas (called Nagos in Brazil) resisted both the Hausa and Fulani influences in Africa but appeared to have been Muslim converts in Brazil. Old rivalries seemed to have been forgotten under slavery as they and others attempted to act collectively overthrow the infidels. Free and enslaved Blacks, Hausas and Yorubas, Muslims and non-

62. Winters, "A Survey of Islam,"430.

63. Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution*, 30.

64. Joao Jose Reis, *Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993). 123.

65. Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution*, 31.

Muslims, plus Indian allies, all forged alliances that threatened to destablilize Bahia. 66

> These blacks. members of Islam. were largely responsible for the slave uprisings in the Brazilian province of Bahia.... The Hausas had powerful secret societies such as the Ogboni which generally followed the same lines as those in West Africa. Their language was spoken in Bahia during the entire nineteenth century and perhaps even in the eighteenth century. Though relatively few in number. their influence was considerable. 67

The Ogboni, a religious cult group, was restricted to older men in the Yoruba city-states. Each cult group such as the Ogboni and the Ifa was organized around a hierachy of priests, some of whom were important political officials. They mediated between the Alafin, the theoretically absolute ruler and divine king, and the Oyo Mesi, the seven principal nonroyal chiefs of the council Oyo was the most populous of the Yoruba city-states. The Alafin obviously did not have absolute power over the Oyo Mesi, giving the Ogboni an extremely influential judicial function. Transported to the New World, the Ogboni continued to play a powerful role in some communities, including in Bahia. 68 In Bahia the Portuguese allowed Africans of the same ethnic group to live in areas called "nations" (capitanias) that constituted members of the same tribe. It was from those bases that Islam spread over the country in the form of sects and secret societies. Imams from Africa and those born in Brazil taught Arabic to their students and instructed them in the Koran. In the Hausa and Yoruba "nations," they established their own schools and mosques at the homes of religious leaders.

> A common African tribal culture, language, and religion provided the necessary cement of organization and the incentive to resistance. which were almost wholly lacking among the slaves in the United States. It is significant that the documents captured from the Bahrain rebels in 1835 were written in Arabic script, and, though there is some doubt as to the extent of the religious basis for the revolt, a number of the leaders were clearly Muslims. 69

---

66. Ibid.
67. Benjamin Nunez, *Dictionary of Afro-Latin American Civilization* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1980), 228.
68. George Brandon, *Santeria from Africa to the New World; The Dead Sell Memories* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 21.
69. Carl N. Degler, "Slavery in Brazil and the United States: An Essay in Comparative History," in *Blacks in White America Before 1865*, ed. Robert V. Haynes (New York: David Mckay, 1972), 183; and Winter, "A Survey of Islam," 430.

After the revolt failed, police found paper and writing slates covered with Arabic wirting. The Malês wrote on the wooden slates with ink made of burnt rice. In a society largely illiterate, the revelation of a literate group of slaves caused great consternation. It indicated that they were intellectuals in Africa. Also disturbing was the face that converts were also being instructed in writing and in the Islamic religion by practicing writing passages from the Koran. 70

The references to women in Malê rituals and other Islamic events are rare because of Islam's patriarchal attitudes. As in many spheres of life, the way things are and the way they are supposed to be may be very different. Such was the case of Islam generally and in Bahia specifically. There were exceptions such as Luiza Mahin, a paramount figure in the 1835 revolt, recognized for her royal heritage and elected queen of her Black community. 71

> In the 1835 goings-on... a slave by the name of Emereciana, handed out Male rings like a general decorating meritorious recruits, an activity for which she was later sentenced to four hundred lashes. Emereciana was an exception, but as time went by, women became more and more integrated into Islamic rituals. [Ethnologist Manoel] Querino considered them to be totally incorporated into what he called "Malê masses." Also, in Rio de Janeiro at the end of the nineteenth century, women participated in funeral ceremonies; they ate and danced in an Islam of a more open variety. 72

It seems that Islamic culture was able to survive after Brazil abolished slavery, but seemed to wane in the Black slave population in the Ubited States. Even into the 20th century the schools in Bahia continued to teach Islamic studies and Arabic. 73

Some slaveholders believed Muslims had a disruptive impact on slave management akin to that of any self-appointed slave spiritual leader. Others felt that Muslim or not, a slave was a slave. A few educated captive Muslims were displayed by the slave regime in attempts to expose and exploit their cultural differences from most other bondsmen. But this kind of ridicule often simply masked underlying fears which recognized that these differences could lead to resistant behavior that was strengthened by a Muslim tradition that to give in to infidel Christian masters would be the ultimate betrayal of Allah and self. 74

---

70. Reis, *Slave Rebellions,* 106-107.
71. William D. Piersen, *Black Legacy: America's Hidden Heritage* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1993), 85.
72. Ibid., 104; 107-108. The rings referred to were worn on the thumb and either the third or fourth finger as a secret sign of recognition. An African custom, the wearers struck their rings together when greeting another Muslim.
73. Winters, "Afro-American Muslims," 197.
74. Owens, *This Species of Property,* 160.

Haiti was another area of the New World that Islam gained a foothold. Slaves from Dahomey and Senegal brought in and preserved that religion in spite of Spanish legal efforts to prevent its spread. In 1758 there was a bloody episode involving Mackandal, a Muslim slave born and educated in Guinea. It resulted in Mackandal being burned alive. Above the religious in fluence, the Haitian native language also contains up to 10% of "Afro-Arabisms, mostly of Sudanese origin," in its vocabulary. [75]

Muslims lived on many of the West Indian islands, including Jamaica. In the New World, only Brazil exceeded the numbers and intensity of slave revolts that occurred in Jamaica. The average number of participants of the 17th and 18th century revolts was 400. For comparison, the relatively large Nat Turner revolt of the United States involved about 70 slaves. Three of the most serious revolts—the first Maroon war, the 1760 rebellion, and the 1832 rebellion—involved over a thousand slaves. Akan slaves (Mossi-Akan), members of the Akan-speaking groups of the Ivory Coast and Ghana (including the Ashanti) instigated and carried out most of the revolts. [76] Many of those people were Muslim.

Other Muslim Africans, including Mandingos, were also enslaved in Jamaica. They lived in the Maroon communities of Jamaica, and may have been leaders in many of their revolts. Near the town of Manchinul at the harbor, there was even a community named Moortown, indicating that Muslim may have lived there before the deportation of most of the Maroons. Trinided and Tobago also contained active Muslim communities. Many Trinidad Muslims embraced Islam in the 1740's before being brought to work in the sugar plantations around 1770. By 1802 they numbered 20,000. In the early 19th century, Trinidadians formed a Muslim society of literate ex-slaves. During the 1830's, Port-of-Spain had a community of Mandingo Muslims captured in Senegal. Their leader, Muhammad Beth, purchased his freedom. That community kept their religious identity and always yearned to return to Africa. Many of them were skilled workers who, after gaining freedom, "established businesses and shops, and raised

75. Bazan, "Some Notes for a History of the Relations Between Latin America, the Arabs, and Islam," 290.

76. H. Orlando Patterson, "The General Causes of Jamaican Slave Revolts," in *Slavery in the New World,* Laura Foner and Eugene D. Genovese, eds. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1969), 211-213.

money to free their fellow Muslims from bondage." Some also established Koranic schools for their children.

In Cuba, numberous Fulas, Mandingos, and Wolofs practiced Islam. As in Brazil, Muslims in Cuba worshipped Allah by joining the Yoruba word for supreme being (*Olorum*) with Allah, forming the word *Olorum-ulua. Olorum* was later abandoned and the word *Obata*, the sky god was substituted forming their new word for Allah, *Obbat Allah.* 77

Guyana's first Muslims came from Africa's west coast. Both the Dutch (who held possession in the 17th century) and British (who obtained possession in 1815) attempeted to ensure that those Fulani slaves would not practice their religion. The British were at least partially successful by telling Guyanese that only East Indians had been Musilm, and by making Christianity the primary route for social mobility. 78

Because many African Muslims spoke and wrote Arabic, they were able to communicate secretly with each other in early America. In a book published in 1811 titled *Practical Rules for the Management and Medical Treatment of Negro Slaves*, the writer noted that some Africans, particularly from Senegal, could read and write Arabic. 79 It would seem that before the 1800's there was some general knowledge of Muslim slaves. In South Carolina in 1790, the legislature "granted a special statute to a special community of people, Muslims, demanding the status of subjects of the Sultan of Morocco (soverign who recognized the U.S.A. in 1787)." 80 After the early 1800's many slaves were born here and did not benefit from Islamic education. Proselytizing by Christians further diluted that heriyage. American Blacks who have tracked their ancestry often encounter Muslims among their ancestors. Also, oral histories of former slaves mention Islamic customs.

Extant texts in Arabic written by Muslims before the Civil War and scattered references in travelogues by European authors of the same period further confirm the once greater visibility of Islam in the south of the United States.81

77. Winters, "A Survey of Islam," 432-433; and Luxner, "Muslims in the Caribbean," 5-6.

78. Luxner, "Muslims in the Caribbean," 7-8.

79. Douglas Grant, *The Fortunate Slave: An Illustration of African Slavery in the Early Eighteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 81.

80. Kaba, "Americans Discover Islam," 26-27.

81. Yusuf, "Islam in America," 80.

An example and one of the most famous Muslim drivers was Bu Allah, the head man on Thomas Spalding's Sapelo Island plantation. A student born in the western Sudan and raised as a Muslim, he continued to practice his faith while enslaved. Three times a day he knelt on his sheepskin rug and prayed facing east. He and his family learned English but continued to use an African language among themselves.

According to another account, Bu Allah, though born in Africa, had "a strain of Arabic blood." He kept a journal in Arabic that no one was even able to decipher "which placed an air of mystery around this plantation patriarch deepening with the years and not ceasing to intrigue the imagination to the present day." Bu Allah had twelve sons and seven daughters. Supposedly, he was a haughty but highly intelligent man who kept the plantation records in Arabic.

> When, in 1813, a British fleet lay off Sapelo Island, Spalding armed and drilled his slaves to better repel an enemy invasion. Bragging that he, Bu Allah, and the newly armed slaves would give a good account of themselves if attacked, Spalding must have been chagrined when his head man responded by declaring: "I will answer for every Negro of the true faith, but not for the *Christian dogs* you own." Despite his somewhat uncharitable nature, the legends surrounding Bu Allah were so persistent and widespread that during the 1890's they inspired Joel Chandler Harris to pen two works of fiction based upon the exploits of the Islamic head man and his family. 82

Spalding received a consignment of muskets from the state of Gerogia to protect his land. He gave them to Bu Allah to distribute and had him drill the slaves in case the British attacked. There was no attack on Sapelo, but the British did attack nearby St. Simon and

---

82. William L. Van Deburg, *The Slave Drivers: Black Agricultural Labor Supervisors in the Antebellum South* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979), 22-23; E.Merton Coulter, Thomas Spalding of Sapelo (University, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1940. In one of those works, a children's book titled *The Story of Arabic documents* inherited from his father, Ben Ali. Ben Ali was an Arab slaver who was himself enslaved during one of his forays into the Senegambian region. Slaves on the plantation both fear and respect Aaron, who is considered more intelligent and dignified than Africans. The three children around whom the tale revolves, Buster John, his sister Sweetest Susan, and slave nurse/companion Drusilla, befriend the strange but brave man Aaron who secretly talks to animals. The principal animal is the black stallion Timoleon, gradson of famous steed Abdallah. Typically, all of the Black slaves are childish and cowardly beings, particularly Drusilla. It is this now transformed non-African courageous slave who manages to save the possessions of the plantation because the Northern teacher and abolitionist whose life he saved years before is a U.S. Senator. General Grant is given orders from that Senator to protect the plantation and Aaron receives a handshake from him as thanks.

Cumberland. In 1824 a hurricane swept Sapelo and it was Bu Allah who heroically led the slaves to safety. 83 Though Thomas Spalding was a highly innovative farmer who could obtain loyalty from his slaves, he was not necessarily a very enlightened man with respect to the mental capabilities of slaves. He believed their reasoning to be limited. However, he was very observant about the cleanliness of Muslims. In processing sugar, Spalding advocated absolute spotlessness if the technique was to work effectively. In a backhanded compliment demonstrating admiration for some Muslim practices he wrote that "no Mahometan, with his seven daily Ablutions, is a greater enemy to dirt than sugar is."84

In 1901 Georgia Conrad, editor of *Southern Workman*, wrote about her 1860 meeting with Bu Allah and other Muslim Blacks. Fortunately, she also noted a few details concerning language and dress.

> On the Georgia coast, near Darien. I used to know a family of Negroes who worshipped "Mohamet." They were tall and well-formed with good features. They conversed with us in English, but in talking among themselves, they used a foreign togue. The head of the tribe was a very old man called Bi-la-la. He always wore a cap that resembled a fez. 85

A manuscript Bu Allah (aka Ben-Ali, Bilali, and Belali Mahomet) wrote resides in the Georgia State Library and includes passages from the *Risalan*, "a well-known test of the Malikite school of Mohammedan law dealing with the ritual of ablutions and the call to prayer." Mrs Maxfield Parrish of St. Simon's Island in Georgia submitted a copy to Northwestern University Professor H. Greenberg for translation in 1937. B. L. Goulding, who received the original from his father, (who got it from Ben-Ali himself), deposited it at the library in 1930. It was the elder Goulding who forwarded a facsimile to Joel Chandler Harris. The document was mistakenly believed to have been a chronicle of Ben-Ali's life in the United States. A field trip to West Africa during 1939-1940 finally revealed the true contents of the 13 page document.

---

83. Coulter, Thomas Spalding, 83. Though the cordiality between Thomas Spalding and his slaves might seem strange, Coulter reported that Spalding refused to let a white man supervise his 250 slaves, a task he managed himself or chose someone like Bu Allah. Except during the picking of cotton, slaves worked only about six hours daily. Spalding also used the task system of work and when the assigned task was completed, the slave could have free time until the next task, according to Coulter, Thomas Spalding, 85.

84. Ibid., 117.

85. Kly, "The African-American Muslim Minority," 154.

When a handwritten copy of the *Risalan* was procured and the "diary" compared with this copy, it at once became apparent that the major portion of the docunent could be identified as a series of excerpts from the *Risalan*, consisting of the title page, portions of the introduction and parts of the chapters dealing with ablutions and the call to prayer.... A small portion of the document remains unidentified, but is believed to be from the Risalan or a similar work. 86

It was also Mrs. Parrish who interviewed Bu Allah's great granddaughter Katie and recorded some important facts of his life. He had eight children: Margaret (Katie's grandmother), Hester, Cotty, Fatima, Shad, Nyrrabuh, Medina, and Binty. Each of the children spoke their father's African language, English, and except for the youngest, French. Both Margaret and Katie were Muslims and Katie "remembered her own Muslim prayers and Portions of a Qur'anic surah which Bilali and his wife repeated when they `got down flat to pray. ``` Katie also recalled that on certain feast days they received special rice balls the size of hen's eggs to eat. Magaret gave those "sarika" to the children saying "sarika-dee" or "ahme" to each one. Katie didn't know the meaning of those words but ander stood they were important. When Bu Allah died, his Koran and prayer rugs were buried with him. 87

Other slaves wrote long passages of the Bible, sometimes from memory, and in proper Arabic. Almost fifty years later a slave named London "wrote out a transcription of the four Gospels and several hymns." 88

In regions where there were numbers of Muslim slaves such as in Georgia and Jamaica, they wrote to each other in Arabic; some English translations of those communications exist. Amazingly, there were some transatlantic communications between enslaved Muslims and their families in Africa, though not extensive by any means. In Jamaica in 1786, a letter from Guinea circulated among the Muslim slaves "enjoining believers to faithfulness."89 Another example, probably a copy of the same, was a pastoral letter that came into the possession of Muhammad Kaba, a Moslem slave. Muhammad Kaba was also known by the slave names of Robert and Robert Tuffit.

86. Joseph H. Greenberg, "The Decipherment of the `Ben-Ali Diary,` A Preliminary Statement, " *The Journal of Negro History* 25 (July 1940): 372-374. Joel Chandler Harris, Atlanta newspaper editor, collected African American slave stories which he published as *The Tales of Uncle Remus*

87. Kly, "The African-American Muslim Minority," 155.

88. Stanley Kaplan and Emma Nagrady Kaplan, *The Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution*, rev. ed. (Amherst: The University of Massachusette Press, 1989), 251-252.

89. Miller and Smith, *Dictionary of Afro-American Slavery*, 371.

> About three years ago [1831], he received from Kingston, by the hands of a boy, a paper written in Africa forty-five years previously.... The paper exhorted all the followers of Mahomet to be true and faithful, if they wished to go to Heaven, etc. The *wathiqa* was destroyed by Muhammad Kaba's wife at the time of the slave rebellion of January 1832, because of its dangerous nature.[90]

Except for Brazil, which had a large number of enslaved Muslims, there was limited contact among them. Separated from their fellow believers, they still struggled to practice their religion. Conversion to Christianity, it seemed, was neither voluntary nor wholehearted. Instead, Islam was (and in many areas, still is) a powerful source of antiwestern enmity.[91]
Because many of the Muslim slaves could read and write Arabic, they wanted to obtain copies of the Koran as a way to maintain their faith. Some were still pleading for a copy 40 years after being first enslaved. However, whites wanted them to convert to Christianity and some used subterfuge to accomplish that.

> ...whites would read them English translations of the Koran until they had mastered the language and then replaced the Koran with the Bible. While remembering the tenets of Islam, the slaves adopted Christian forms and beliefs because many of them were almost identical to the teachings of Mohamet.

Even though the slaves may have said "God" instead of "Allah" and "Jesus Christ" instead of "Mohammed," many were using Christian words to hide their fundamental Islamic beliefs. To them "the religion is the same, but different countries have different names." One of the reasons they were able to accommodate Christianity was because there were sufficient similarities between the two religions. They may have appeared to be Christians outwardly some remained Muslim in their hearts.[92]

---

90. Ivor Wilks, "Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq of Timbuktu," in *Africa Remembered: Narratives by West Africans from the Era of the Slave Trade,* ed. Philip D. Curtin (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967), 164. Kaba was born in Africa and lived on a Manchester Parish plantation in Jamaica. He was a leader of a group of Muslims and received a letter from African King Abu Bakr, an imam. The Fulbe king of Futa Djalon declared a jihad in 1804 that apparently had an influence on the 1832 Jamaican slave rebellion, according to Nunez, *Dictionary of Afro-Latin American Civilization,* 327.
91. Miller and Smith, *Dictionary of Afro-American Slavery,* 371.
92. John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 73; and Gayraud S. Wilson, Black Religion and Black Radicalism, C. Eric Lincoln Series on Black Religion (Garden Vity, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1972), 10-11.

...there is an amazingly close overlap between the basic of Islam and Christianity. and of the African religions. Neither Islam nor Christianity is foreign in its essence to African religious ideas. And once they are stripped of some of their specific modes of expression. African religious ideas are not foreign to the Chrisitan or Muslim either.93

One of the most extraordinary and famous American Muslim was Yarrow Mamout, remembered through anecdotes told by the famous artist Charles Willson Peale. Mamout purchased his freedom, lived through the Revolutionary War, acquired property, and remained a devout Musl;im. He lived to be over 100 years old and in 1819, Peale traveled to Georgtown to paint his portrait. Peale wrote Mamout's story in his diary that day and it may be the only place where his narrative exists.

I spent the whole day and not only painted a good likeness of him. but also the drapery and background—However to finish it more completely I engaged him to set the next day—and early in the morning went to see some of the family who had knowledge of him for many years and whose Ancestors had purchased him from the ship that brought him from Africa. A Mr. Bell in a Bank directed me to an ancient widow who had set him free—on making inquiry of this Lady about his age. for he told me that would be 134 years old in Next March. I found that he counted 12 moons to the year. and that he was 35 years old when he was first brought to America by Cptn Dow—But the widow Bell told me that it was a practice in former times when slaves were brought into the Country. they were valued by a committee who estimated their age and she thought that he had been sold as 14 years or thereabouts, yet he might be a little older....

Yarrow owns a house and lotts & is known by most of the Inhabitants of Georgetown & particularly by the Boys who are often teazing him which he takes in good humour. It appears to me that the good temper of the man has contributed to longevity. Yarrow has been noted for sobriety & cheerfull conduct. he professes to be a Mahometan. and is often seen & heard in the Streets singing Praises to God—and conversing with him he said man is no good unless his religion come from the heart....

The acquaintances of him often banter him about eating Bacon and drinking Whiskey—but Yarrow says it is no good to eat Hog—& drink whiskey is very bad.94

One of the earliest complete accounts of a Muslim slave in the United States was *Some Memoirs of the Life of Job the Son of Solomon the High Priest of Boonda in Africa,* the man mentioned in the previous paragraph. Thomas Bluett of Maryland wrote *Memoirs,*

93. Paul Bohannan and Philip Curtin, *Africa and Africans,* 3rd. ed. (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1988), 206.

94. Ibid., 252-255.

published in London, England in 1816. Francis Moore's *Travels into the Inland Parts* of Africa, published in London in 1738, also contains portions of Job ben Solomon's life (Job ben Solomon's given name was Ayuba Suleiman but because of the amount of existing material under the Anglicized version of his name, it is the one used in this document). Job was a slave in Maryland between the years 1731 to 1733. He was described as "a Fula from the kingdom of Futa, in what is now French Senegal, who wrote Arabic and was familiar with the Koran—indeed he could repeat the whole of it,"[95] From an important clerical family, Job studied with the future king of the Fulbe. His name was also written as "Hyuba, Boon Salumrna, Boon Hibrahema; i.e. Job, the Son of Solomon, the Son of Abraham," and his family's surname was Jallo [Diallo]. At age 15 Job assisted his father as Emaum [Imam] in Bundo, the town founded by his grandfather.[96] Job's story is very remarkable because of his repatriation to his home in Africa. Job appeared in Francis Moore's narrative of February 1731, who recorded the following:

> ...Soon after came down the Arabella, Captain Pyke, a separate Trader, from Joar, loaded with Slaves; and having stay'd a Day or two James Fort, sail'd for Maryland, having among his Compliment of Slaves on Man call'd Job ben Solomon, of the Pholey Race, and Son to the High Priest of Bundo in Foota, a place about ten Days Journey from Gillyfree;who was traveling on the South Side of this River, with a Servant, and about twenty or thirty Head of Cattle, which induced a King of a Country a little Way inland, between Tancrowall and Yamina, not only to seize his Cattle, but also his Person and Man, and sold them both to Captain Pyke, as he was trading at Joar. He would have been redeemed by the Pholeys, but was carried out of the River before they had Notice of his being a slave. 97

Job's father sent him and two servants to Pyke in an effort to sell two boys to him as slaves. Job was an experienced slave trader and when he and Pyke couldn't agree on a price, he decided to sell the boys elsewhere. His father had warned him not to cross the Gambia because the Mandingo there were at war with the Fulbe. Job, against his father's warnings, crossed the river with a Fulbe interpreter, Loumein Yaoi. After selling the slaves and acquiring 28 head of cattle, he

95. "Autobiography of Omar ibn Said, Slave in North Carolina, 1831," *The American Historical Review* 30 (July 1925): 787.

96. Elizabeth Doonan, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America,* vol. 2, The Eighteenth Century (Washington, DC: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1931), 420; and Piersen, Black Legacy, 88.

97. Ibid., 399-400.

stopped at a Fulbe village to rest, disarming himself. Seven or eight Mandingos burst through the rear door of their hut, captured the two men, and shaved their hair and beards as a sign of marketable property. The slavers placed them on board the *Arabella,* and Job was finally able to tell Captain Pyke about his unjust enslavement. Not wanting to create ill-will in the region for buying people unjustly captured, Pyke offered to free the two men for an exchange of two slaves each. It was then Sunday and the ship would sail on Friday. Before a messenger could reach Job's father and arrange for the exchange, the *Arabella* sailed. 98

As recounted by Francis Moore, the Arabella's Captain Pyke carried Job to Maryland and sold his cargo to Vachell Denton, a broker for Alexander Tolsey for £45. Tolsey renamed Job "Simon" and put him to work on his tobacco plantation on Kent Island, Queen Anne's County, the Chesapeake Bay. The work assigned to Job seemed too hard for him so he was removed from the tobacco to herd cattle. Because of his previous high status, he had difficulty adjusting to the harsh and indignant life of slavery. He was allowed to practice his religion but each time he retired to pray, a white boy followed him to watch. This boy was very amused by Job's religious practices and taunted him and threw dirt in his face. 99 He stayed with Tolsey "about a Twelvemonth without being once beat by his Master; at the End of which time he had the good Fortune to have a Letter of his own writing in the Arabic Tongue convey'd to England."100 Maryland was still a British colony and by a circuitous route, the letter ended up in the hands of James Oglethorpe, *de facto* governor and trustee of Georgia. Oglethorpe, because of economic reasons, opposed slavery in Georgia, owned slaves on his plantation in South Carolina, and was Deputy Governor of the Royal African Company, which held the British monopoly on slavery until 1696.101 Job attempted to flee Kent Island and made it to Kent County on the Chesapeake Bay before being captured. He was arrested and thrown into the local jail, which was also the tavern. Because the only words the patrons could understand were "Allah" and "Mohammed," they concluded he was a Muslim. Thomas Bluett, an attorney, met Job at this time and would remain his friend.

A nearby slave who spoke the Wolof language ascertained Job's

98. Grant, *The Fortunate Slave,* 63,67-69.

99. Ibid., 78-82.

100. Doonan, *History of the Slave Trade,* 414-415; and Piersen, Black Legacy, 78.

101. Higginbotham, *In the Matter of Color,* 63,216.

story and Tolsey was contacted. Rather than being incensed that Job had run away, Tolsey allowed him to pray alone and gave him easier duties, perhaps because Tolsey was impressed that Job was actually a prince in his own country. Job decided to contact his father. He wrote a letter in Arabic and sent it to Vachell Denton for forwarding to Captain Pyke who could take it to Africa. Because Pyke had already set sail for London, Denton sent the letter to Captain Hunt in London with instructions that it be given to Pyke there. The letter reached Hunt but unfortunately, Pyke had already left for Gambia when it arrived. Not knowing what to do with the letter and not knowing its contents, Hunt took the letter to the friends in the Royal African Company for translation. 102

Oglethorpe sent the letter to Oxford where John Gagnier, who held the Laudian chair of Arabic, translated it. Oglethorpe was so impressed with Job that he directed that he be purchased from his master and sent to England. Oglethorpe arranged that Job's original purchase price of £45 be paid to his owner upon Job's delivery to England. Because of the severe winter, there was a delay before Job could set sail, so in the meantime he worked with a minister, John Humphrys, teaching him Arabic. He was able to sail in March 1733 on the *William,* accompanied by his friend Thomas Bluett. Instead of traveling in the foul hold of the ship, he was now a guest of the captain.

While in London Job did some translating for Sir Hans Sloane whose collections became the nucleus of the British Museum. Sloane was the physician to Queen Caroline "and the greatest collector of 'rarities' of his age." Some of Slonae's personal weath came from slavery. While practicing medicine in Jamaica he married a rich widow of a planter. Besides collecting materials for his natural history of the Island, printed in 1707, he recorded the gruesome punishments of slaves. Abolitionists used those accounts to support their ideas.

Among Sloane's collection amassed in England were coins, medals and 42,000 bound books and manuscripts that he hoped Job might translate. Sloane was impressed by Job's ability in translating "Ancient as well as modern Arabick." Because of those abilities, Job became the toast of English society.103

> He was by him [Sloane] recommended to his Grace the Duke of Montague, who being pleased with the Sweetness of Humour, and Mildness of Temper, as well as Genius and Capacity of the Man, introduced him to Court, where he was graciously

102. Grant, *The Fortunate Slave,* 82-84.
103. Ibid., 84-87,99-101.

received by the Royal Family, and most of the Nobility, from whom he received distinguishing Marks of Favour.

One of the amazing reports about Job concerned his extraordinary memory. Both in America and in England, people he knew claimed that he could quote the complete Koran from memory. As improbable as that might sound, Guinness Book of Records contains such an example. While in England Job supposedly wrote copies of the Koran in Arabic from remembrance.[104] Thomas Bluett, who traveled to England with Job and wrote a detailed account of him, had the following to say:

> His Memory was extraordinary; for when he was fifteen Years old he could say the whole Alcoran [Koran] by heart, and while he was here in England he wrote three Copies of it without looking to one of those three when he wrote the others. He would often laugh at me when he heard me say I had forgot any Thing, and told me he hardly ever forgot any Thing in his Life, and wondered that any other body should.[105]

After 14 months Job wanted to depart for his home at Budo. He left England with gifts from the royal family. They included a gold watch from William III's wife Queen Caroline, and others from the Dukes of Northumberland and Montague. He journeyed with Francis Moore to Africa. While sitting together under a tree near his home, Job recognized the six or seven men who had sold him into slavery. Though wanting to kill the men, (they didn't recognize him) he held back and discovered that their master, a king, was dead. One of the items traded for Job was a pistol, always kept loaded, that the king wore slung around his neck by a string. One day the pistol accidentally fired and the balls hit the king in the throat, killing him. [106]

> At the Closing of this Story Job was so very much transported, that he immediately fell on his Knees, and returned Thanks to Mahomet for making this Man die by the very Goods for which he sold him into Slavery....[107]

One January 27, 1736, Job ben Solomon wrote a letter to Mr. Smith, a writing master at St. Paul's School in England, indicating he

---

104. Wilson Armistead, *A Tribute for the Negro* (Manchester, England: William Irwin, 1848) , 240.

105. Donnan, *History of the Slave Trade,* 414-416; and H.G.Adams, ed.,God's Image in Ebony (London: Partridge and Oakey, 1854), 427.

106. Ibid., 39.

107. Ibid., 415.

arrived safely in his own land. He told Smith about events that had occurred since he left his home, such as the death of his father and the remarriage of one of his wives. He then acknowledged the assistance of his friends in England. Further, he decided to help the English in the gum Arabic trade in Gambia because they previously had to buy it from French settlements.[108] In the mid-1700's the French and the Dutch fought over the Arabic gum trade, considered more profitable than the slave trade. [109] A letter received by Sir Hans Sloane from Job and forwarded to the Royal Society on November 4, 1736, appeared in part in both *Gentlemen's* and the *London Magazine*. He thanked the English for their favors and said that he was then in the country where the "Gum Arabick" grows. He also promised the English that he would help them retrieve gold if they would supply him with flat-bottomed boats.

Job continued to correspond with his English and American friends—the Duke of Montague (d. 1749), Sir Hans Sloane (d. 1753), Francis Moore (d.?), and Thomas Bluett (d. 1750). His death is registered in the records of the distinguished Gentlemen's Society of Spalding (who elected him as an honorary member on May 23, 1734) as being 1773. However, there is no inkling regarding how that occurrence that took place so far from England came to the Society's attention.[110]

> One of his uncles who resides there [Bundo], embracing him and said, "During sixty years, thou art the first slave that I have seen return from the American Isles." He wrote many letter to his friends in Europe and America, which were translated and perused with interest. At his father's death, he became his successor, and was much beloved by his subjects. [111]

Job was able to free another Moslem from slavery, his old friend and servant Loumein Yaoi (Lahamin Joy). He turned to the Duke of Montague who arranged payment for Loumein Yoai's release and his passage back to Africa through England. Job's friend Thomas Bluett located Yaoi in Maryland and he arrived in England in 1737 where the Royal African Company arranged for his passage home. A letter to the Duke of Montague said that Loumein Yaoi, captured and taken to

---

108. Ibid., 455-456.

109. Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana,* 33.

110. Grant, *The Fortunate Slave,* 144-145, 186, and 198-199.

111. A. Mott, *Biographical Sketches and Interesting Anecdotes of Persons of Color,* 2nd ed. (New York: Mahlon Day, 1837), 132.

Maryland with Job, should be treated kindly and be given safe passage to Gambia. 112

If Job ben Solomon's return to Africa seems to be almost too miraculous to be true, perhaps it is, to some extent. One has to wonder why a principal in the international slave trade would want to go to the aid of an enslaved African who could read and write Arabic. Perhaps the answer lies not only in Job's intellectual abilities, but also in economic considerations. In the earlier years of the Atlantic slave trade there were a few slaves returned to Africa because local African laws prohibited the enslavement of Muslims, particularly those from powerful families. Perhaps because Oglethorpe may have believed that the enslavement of Job would negatively affect the Royal African Company (or because the return of Job would positively affect the relationship), he was returned home.113 Beginning in the early 1700's, a series of *jihads* led to the enslavement of more Muslims and almost none were able to return home.

> Most Muslim slaves seem to have arrived in the Americas during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when militant Islamic reformers began a revolutionary series of religious and state-building wars that shook the Sudan. The first jihad occurred in Futa Djalon in the 1720's Others followed in Futa Toro and Bondo (1776), Hausaland (1804), Bornu (1808), Adamawa (1809), and Macina (1810). These struggles, some short but others protracted, unsettled all of West Africa and produced many prisoners of war for the slave trade, Muslims among them. Other Muslims were sent into slavery from such non-Islamic states as Bambara and Ashanti. 114

Theodore Dwight published the account of Old Paul (Lamine Kebe) in 1864. In the article Dwight wrote of his familiarity with Job ben Solomon and says there were other Africans with similar backgrounds. However, no one wrote down their stories. In the South the conditions of slavery thwarted Dwight and at least one other person's attempts to

112. Grant, *The fortunate Slave,* 195-196.

113. There are accounts of other Africans being freed from slavery. Black leaders Martin Delany and Bishop Henry McNeal Turner told stories of their ancestors. Delany's maternal grandfather, Shango, was freed and returned to Africa. His royal grandmother was also manumitted but opted to remain in America. Turner's royal grandfather, David Greer, won his freedom but also elected to stay, according to Pierson, Black Legacy, 93.

114. Miller and Smith, *Dictionary of Afro-American Slavery,* 370. Brazil became the home to Moslem Bornu slaves of western Sudan. They were suppposedly a mixed group with broad faces and large-boned frames, according to Nunez, *Dictionary of Afro-Latin American Civilization,* 84.

record the histories of Muslims. He located a few Muslims in the North, but only three were able to write. He mentioned the names of Prince (Abdul Rahahman or, Abd al- Rahman), Morro (Omar ibn Said), and Lamine Kebe. Dwight saw Abd al-Rahman once in New York in 1830 and received a document from Morro describing his life, written in Arabic. He got the opportunity to interview Lamine Kebe extensively.

> ...and from "Old Paul," or "Lehman Kibby," he [Dwight] obtained a great amount of most interesting information. That venerable old man was liberated in 1835, after being about forty years a slave in South Carolina, Alabama, and other southern states, and spent about a year in New York, under the care of the Colonization Society, while waiting for a vessel to take him back to his native country. The writer held numerous and prolonged interviews with him, and found him deeply interested in making his communications concerning his native country and people, as well as his own history, for the purpose of having them published, for the information of Americans. He often said, "There are good men in America, but all are very ignorant of Africa...."115

Dwight seemed to have respect for Lamine Kebe as well as for Islam. He believed Islam was a civilizing factor for "negroes" and even rated it above Catholicism. He seemed quite familiar with the history of Islam in Africa, stating correctly that some areas of Africa inhabited by "the Black Race" have kingdoms, "most of which have been in existence several Centuries, and some a thousand years, mostly under the influence of Mohammendan instiutions."

> This [Mohammendan learning] forms an essential part of the Moslem system, and has long been in operation on large families of the negro race, and molded them after the civilized model of the Arabs and Moors. Unlike Popery, if favors, nay, requires, as a fundamental principle, the free and universal reading and study of their sacred book; and, instead of withholding it from the people under penalties of death and perdition, it establishes schools for all classes, primarily to teach its languages and doctrines. Extracts from the Koran form the earliest reading lessons of children, and the commentaries and other works founded upon it furnish the principal subjects of the advanced studies.116

Respect for Lamine Kebe and his saga is evident because Dwight elaborated on the interviews by infusing them with extracts from other travelers, all of which confirmed his informant's story. Dwight also

115. Theodore Dwight, "Condition and Character of Negroes in Africa," *The Methodist Quarterly Review* 45 (January 1864): 80-81. Dwight writes the names of the Africans as Job-ben Solomon, Abder-rahman, and Omer-ben-Sayeed.

116. Ibid., 78.

said that Lamine Kebe "was in possession of many facts still unknown even to the most learned of America and Europe." Some of the interviews received widespread attention.

> Three or four pages on the subject, published in 1836 in the proceedings of the American Lyceum, attracted attention in Europe, and the Paris Geographical Society to make repeated applications for more information; and Dr. Latham quoted them as one of the only three authorities on the Sereculy language, in his learned paper presented to the British Scientific Association. Dr. Coelle, missionary of the Church Missionary Society, has since given a brief vocabulary of that language, (Paul's native tongue,) but without any particular information of the people. They are one of the negro families before alluded to, which are intermingled, without being amalgamated, over extensive regions in Nigritia, partly Mohammendan and partly Pagan.117

Lamine Kebe was from the southern erea of Futa that the Fulbe ruled. His country lay south of the Sahara and was the most western of the independent kingdoms in that region. He moved to Kebe, or Kibbe, where he received an education under several masters. He had the opportunity to accompany military and mercantile caravans to adjacent and distant countries and related details of those accounts to Dwight. Kebe also told of the Islamic influence of his community.

> ...but as the Futa is a Mohammedan country, the religion of the false prophet affords a bund of union strong enough to hold the heterogeneous multitiude under one government, and generally in the peaceful enjoyment of the laws, arts, and learning which belong to a Mohammedan community, being provided for by the Koran and claimed by its believers.118

Kebe also told of eduction in Arabic, the language of the Koran. One should be able to read the Koran in Arabic becauce it is considered to be untranslatable, according to orthodox Muslims.

> Briefly, the rhetoric and rhythm of the Arabic of the Koran are so Characteristic, so powerful, so highly emotive, that any version whatsoever is bound in the nature of things to be but a poor copy of the glittering splendor of the original.119

In Kebe's community Arabic was taught in the schools "wherever the priests can find pupils." Dwight believed that the teaching of Arabic

---

117. Ibid., 81. 118. Ibid., 83.

119. Arthur J. Arberry, trans., *The Koran Interpreted* (New York: Macmillan, Publishing Company 1955), 24.

was a method of proselytizing. He noted the presence of priests in Liberia, Sierra Leone and other areas, "teaching children to write the Arabic characters on the sand." Kebe himself was a schoolmaster and disclosed that he had an aunt who was more educated than he, and was famous for her teaching skills. Further, Kebe revealed the extent of education among his people, a phenomenon usually not noted by historians.

> Schools he said, were generally established through the country, provision being made by law educating children of all classes, the poor being taught gratuitously. All the details of the system he was ready to give in answer to inquires, including the methods, rules, books, etc. The books, of course, were all in manuscript; and what has seemed difficult of belief, even by well-informed persons in our country, several native African languages were written in Arabic characters. He gave a catalogue of about thirty books in his own mother tongue, (the Serrawolly,) with some account of their nature and contents.120

William Fox of the Wesleyan Missions to West Africa reported the extent of education among Kebe's people. Fox traveled to the area where Kebe received his education, meeting with a scribe with whom he discussed "experimental religion." Also African manuscripts, written in Arabic by "accomplished negro Mohammedan travelers" at Monrovia, Liberia, were requested by a "gentleman in New York." Dr. Bird of Hartford, Connecticut, translated the manuscripts.

> ...[they] contain evidence of a sincere religious zeal in the writers, who address their solemn appeals to the unknown stranger who requested a written communication from them, presuming, as it appears, that he was not a Moslem, and was therefore, ignorant of his Maker, his obligations to him, and the importance of knowing and serving him. Some passages in those documents would be perfectly appropriate to a sermon, even in an American pulpit, except that the idea of a Saviour is no expressed; but there are other parts which display the extreme ignorance of the writers respecting countries distant from their own.121

The "ignorance" referred to was a description of China, "full of the greatest extravagance, showing a degree of childish misconception and credulity which might be thought a proof of negro mental imbecility...." To Dwight's credit, he compared the description of China in the African manuscript to Sir John Maundevill's travel descriptions, translated and used in Europe almost four centuries before. That purported credible work contained descriptions of "men with two

120. Dwight, "Condition and Character of Negroes," 84.
121. Ibid., 84-85.

heads, and various other monsters, reported to be the inhabitants of fabulous countries, or lands barely known by name."[122] Far from demonstrating "negro mental imbecility," the African description of China showed that both Africans and Europeans could construct fabulous images.

Dr. Bird's translation of one of the supplied manuscripts from Arabic revealed the topic of "the Origin of Man." It appeared to be a guide or moral code to live by. The opening exposes its Muslim core.

> "In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful," and adds: "May God bless our lord Mohammed, his prophet, and guard him and his disciples, and give him peace abundantly." [123]

In 1836 Morro (el-Hadj Omar ibn Said), living at Fayetteville, North Carolina, responded to a letter Kebe sent to him, revealing some delails. Omar, born in 1770 nearly 250 miles northeast of Dakar in Futa Toro, was brought to Charleston in 1807. He had been married and had a son but never saw his family again. His father was killed in a tribal war when Omar was five and he was raised by an uncle. He came in contact with Muslim missionaries who converted him and taught him Arabic. Omar became a Muslim missionary and teacher and just before his enslavement became a trader in salt and cotton. About twenty-five years old before his enslavement, Omar also fought in jihads and even managed to make a pilgrimage to Mecca. He was able to communicate his story in his own words to Kebe and in 1831, penned an autobiography. [124]

> In the name of God, the compassionate, etc. I am not able to write my life. I have forgotten much of the language of the Arabs. I read not the grammatical, and but little of the common dialect. I ask thee, O brother, to reproach me not, for my eyes are weak, and my body also. [He was then about seventy-one years of age.]
>
> My name is Omar-ben-Sayeed. The place of my birth is Futa Toro, between the two rivers. [Probably the Senegal and the Gambia, or the Senegal and Niger, in their upper parts.] The teachers of Bundo-Futa were a sheik named Mohammed-Sayeed, my brother, and the sheik Soleyman Kimba, and the sheik Jebraeel-Abdel. I was a teacher twenty-five years. There came a great army to my country. They killed many people. They took me to the sea, and sold me in the hands of the Christians, who bound me, and sent me on board a great ship. And we sailed a month and half a month, when we came to a place called Charleston in the

---

122. Ibid., 84. 123. Ibid., 86.

124. George H. Callcott, "Omar Ibn Seid, A Slave who wrote an Autobiography in Arabic," *The Journal of Negro History* 39 (January 1954): 58-59; and Clyde-Ahmad Winters, review of Roots, by Alex Haley, *In Al-Ittihad* 8 (October/November 1976): 19.

Christian language. Here they sold me to a small, weak, and wicked man named Johnson, a complete infidel, who had no fear of God at all. Now I am a small man, and not able to do hard work. So I fled from the hand of Johnson, and, after a month, came to a place where I saw some houses. On the new moon I went into a large house to pray; a lad saw me, and rode off to the place of his father, and informed him that he had seen a black man in the great house. A man named Handah, (Hunter) and another man with him, on horseback, came, attended by a troop of dogs. They took me and made me go with them twelve miles, to a place called Faydill, (Fayetteville) where they put me in a great house, from which I could not go out. I continued in the great house which in the Christian language they call jail, sixteen days and nights. One Friday the jailer came and opened the door, and I saw a great many men, all of them Christians, some of whom called out, What is your name? I did not understand their Christian language.125

Omar recalled that Bob Mumford took him from the jail to his homestead, where he stayed four days and nights. James Owen, son-in-law of Mumford by marriage to his daughter Betsy, asked if he wanted to go with them to Bladen. He remained there until the time he wrote the letter to Kebe. James Owen was a general in the state militia and his brother John was the future governor. Both had seen him at the jail and took him to "Milton," James' plantation, from where they finally purchased him from his former master. From another passage in the letter, it seems that Omar receives relatively good treatment as a slave. It also seemed that he converted to Christianity.

O people of North Carolina! O people of South Carolina! O people of America, all of you! you have a righteous man among you named James Owen, and with him John Owen. These are pious men. All that they ate I ate; as they dressed I dressed. James and his brother read to me the Gospel. God our Lord, our creator, our king, the arbiter of our condition, the bountiful, opened to my heart the right way.126

Reverend William Plumer wrote an article that was published in the *New York Observer* dated January 8, 1863. Its title was "Meroh, a Native African" and it recounted some of his life's story. He included some information about his religious experiences in America.

He mentions that when confined in the Cumberland County jail, the poor man, finding some coals in the ashes, wrote in Arabic on the walls what were understood to be appeals for succor; that when he came to General Owen's family he was at first a staunch Mohammedan and kept Ramadan; that through the kindness of his friends an English version of the Koran was procured for him, along with the Bible, but that gradually he became a Christian; that he was baptized and received into the

125. Dwight, "Conditions and Character of Negroes," 89.
126. Ibid.

Presbyterian Church at Fayetteville by the Rev. Dr. Snodgrass (which fixes the date of such reception to 1819-1822). but later was transferred to a Wilmington church. 127

The Owen family procured the Bible mentioned above, plus a copy of the Koran—both written in Arabic. Converting to Christianity, Omar was baptized in his church. the Bible, still in the Davidson College Library in North Carolina, is described as worn and dog-eared with "about half a dozen homespun covers on it." As each cover wore out he would sew a new one over it. Omar also corresponded with the American Bible Society and asked that a Bible translated into Arabic be sent to his people. One was sent and the tribal chief wrote the Society thanking them.128

Omar also wrote a letter to someone named Hunter, who apparently asked him to write an autobiographical account of his life. Hunter may have been one of the two men who found him in the church and who took him to Fayetteville. In 1831 he disclosed the following about himself before his enslavement.

> Before I came to the Christian country, my religion was the religion of "Mohammed, the Apostle of God—may God have mercy upon him and give him peace." I walked to the mosque before day-break, washed my face and head and hands and feet. I prayed at noon, prayed in the afternoon, prayed at sunset, prayed in the evening. I gave alms every year, gold, silver, seeds, cattle, sheep, goats, rice, wheat, and barley. I gave tithes of all the above-named things. I went every year to the holy war against the infidels. I went on pilgrimage to Mecca, as all did who were able—My father had six sons and five daughters, and my mother had three sons and one daughter. When I left my country I was thirty-seven years old; I have been the country of the Christians twenty-four years.129

Omar apprised Hunter about his religious life after his conversion to Christianity. Formerly, he loved reading the Koran but his owners habitually read him the Bible. They seemed to primarily responsible for his conversion, but there is conflicting information on its depth. Reverend Gurley wrote in 1837 that Omar "retained a devoted attachment to the faith of his fathers, and deemed a copy of the Koran in Arabic...his richest treasure."130 Perhaps there is some reason to feel Omar's conversion may not have been so deep. Perhaps as other Muslims, he may have been driven to please his master and feigned

127. "Autobiography of Omar ibn Said," *The American Historical Review* 30 (July 1925): 791-792.
128. Callcott, "Omar Ibn Seid," 62-63.
129. "Autobiography of Omar ibn Said," 793-794.
130. Ibid., 790.

conversion. The worn state of his Bible might indicate that he was very interested in the contents. However, when a minister translated one of his copies of the 23rd Psalm, he found that it began with the words, "May God have mercy on the Prophet Mohammed." There are abundant notes in his Bible expressing both Christian and Islamic views.[131] The following express some of his feelings and observations.

> Thanks to the Lord of all words, thanks in abundance. He is plenteous in mercy and abundant in goodness.
>
> For the law was given by Moses but grace and truth were by Jesus the Messiah.
>
> When I was a Mohammedan I prayed thus: "Thanks be to God, Lord of all words, the merciful the gracious, Lord of all words, the merciful the gracious, Lord of the day of Judgement, thee we serve, on thee we call for help. Direct us in the right way, the way of those on whom thou hast had mercy, with whom thou hast not been angry and who walk not in error. Amen." —But now I pray "Our Father," etc., in the words of Lord Jesus the Messiah.[132]

A translator analyzed Omar's writing style. He obviously respected Omar for his obvious educational achievements.

> The narrative is very obscure in language, the writer, as he himself declares, being ignorant of the grammatical forms....It is written in a plain and, with few exceptions, very legible *Moghrebby,* or western Arabic character....It affords an idea of the degree of education among the Moslem blacks, when we see a man like this able to read and write a language so different from his own native tongue. Where is the youth, or even the adult, among the mass of our people who is able to do the same in Latin or Greek?[133]

According to a descendent of the Owen family who verified Omar's account of his life, he enjoyed living in Bladen County on the Milton estate. He was not "treated as a slave, had a seat by himself in the country church....." He had his own house and "a little negro" brought him meals that the master's cook prepared. In the 1850's the Owens moved to Wilmington, North Carolina, and took Omar with them. He became a member of the Presbyterian church in that community and the head butler at "Owen Hill," Governor Owen's plantation. He was often seen sitting on the veranda wearing a long black coat and turban, sometimes entertaining children with his tales.[134] Omar died after the Civil War in 1874 and was interred on the grounds. In 1925, a

131. Callcott, "Omar Ibn Seid," 62.

132. "Autobiography of Omar ibn Said," 794.

133. Dwight, "Condition and Character of Negroes," 90-91.

134. Callcott, "Omar Ibn Seid," 62.

daguerreotype and some Arab manuscirpts were still held by his former master's family 135

Another interview of Moro published in the African Repository of June 1869 adds another dimension to his life. He was about 89 years old at the time and that interview provided a glimpse into the international ties of Islam.

As I write of the good old man whose name is mentioned above, a communication of some interest, addressed to him, lies on the table before me. It is a letter in Arabic (translated into Chrinese and English) sent to Moreau by Yang, a Chinese Mohammedan, residing in Canton, and which was written at the suggestion of Rev. D. Ball Missionary at Canton, an acquaintance of both parties. The following are the concluding words: " The true Lord, the most worthy, have compassion on my respected Senior Moreau, whose letter has come to hand. It is fully understood. But he and I are separated so many thousand miles from each other that we are not able to meet each other and speak face to face; but we may hope for the returning favors of the true Lord. This will be most fortunate, most fortunate!" I confess that it is not without awakened interest and thought that I look upon the ancient characters which convey words of respect and hope from one in the far East to a dweller in the far West, and which are reproduced in the languages which are now spoken by more than one-half of the inhabitants of our earth.136

Abd al-Rahman Ibrahima, nicknamed "the Moorish Prince," was born in 1762, probably on a Monday or Friday. Nothing is known of his mother except she was of noble rank and one of four wives. His grandfather was king of the province. His father Sori conquered new lands where his family moved when Ibrahima was five. The army, after a jihad, named Sori *almaami* or "he who leads the community in prayer." During the 1750's Sori led a series of jihads in areas of Africa ruled by the Futa. The town in which the family lived was Timbo with a population of over 6,000 before the 1800's. The houses were round with mud walls and large, airy rooms. Each dwelling had a courtyard surrounded by a high hedge. The town and its mosque impressed some Europeans.

The mosque, set among orange trees, was the most prominent structure in town, and the second oldest place of worship in Futa. Built in the shape of a great cone, it was supported internally by wooden pillars sunk into a pressed clay floor. The faithful worshipped on sheepskin mats placed in residences near Timbo and were often there.137

---

135. "Autobiography of Omar ibn Said," 791.

136. John W. Blassingame, ed. *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews, and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977),470.

137. *Terry Alford, Prince Among Slaves* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977),4-6.,9

In 1828 American Cyrus Griffin described the education in Muslim schools. Usually one would see more youth from the upper classes, though education was theoretically open to all. Clerics associated with mosques taught reading, writing, arithmetic, and languages.

> Manuscript texts of the Qur'an, the Pentateuch, and other works were circulated. Individual libraries on religion and jurisprudence were common, and books and writing paper were prized gifts. Most young Muslims, spurred by a teacher's ferule if all else failed, had read the Qur'an several times and copied it at least once by age twelve. Additional study in Islamic law was available to those who wished it.138

At the age of twelve Ibrahima was sent to Macina and the city of Timbuktu, 1,000 miles away, for his education. He was probably being prepared to succeed his father in office. In that city of mosques, he probably learned the Koran, "geography, astronomy, calculations...the laws of the country," and other subjects.139 It was in 1781 that a tale begins that would touch Ibrahima many years later.

> When the Prince was nineteen years of age, Dr. [John Coates] Cox, an American citizen, and surgeon on board a ship which arrived at Sierra Leone, having gone on a hunting expedition into the interior, and lost himself in the woods, found on his return to the coast that his vessel had sailed. He then undertook an excursion into the country, and arrived at length sick and lame in the Territory of Futa Djalon. Being the first white man seen in that country, he was carried as a great curiosity to the King, Abd's father, at Timbo 140

Cox was the first white man beheld by the inhabitants of Timbo. Continually pressed by people, he needed guards just to take a walk.141 The king entertained Cox for six months, gave him a house and a nurse, and afterward he gave him clothes, gold, ivory, and an armed escort to take him to his ship. While at Timbo Cox might have married and fathered a child. The child's mother may have been Ibrahima's sister. Ibrahima also joined his troupe and mastered English through him. Cox bade good-by to the Africans (and probably to his pregnant wife) and returned to America.142 Meanwhile, Ibrahima rose to colonel in his father's army. Returning from a successful campaign he and his men were ambushed and Ibrahima was taken prisoner. He was sold to

---

138. Ibid., 6. 139. Ibid., 13.

140. Robert Benjamin Lewis, *Light and Truth, From Ancient and Sacred History* (Portland, ME: D.C. Colesworthy, 1836), 137-139.

141. Alford, *Prince Among Slaves,* 17.

142. Ibid., 18.

the Mandingos who sold him to a slaver at the month of the Gambia. He was finally sold at Natchez, Mississippi, to Colonel Thomas Foster. Foster bought a woman named Isabella, "an interesting, fine-looking...woman" and a Christian, who married Ibrahima on Christmas Day, 1794. Because there was truly a formal ceremony indicates that Ibrahima and Isabella were treated superior to most slaves.

Isabella took three children with her to Foster's plantation but only one of them, Limerick, was known to be her child. Jacob and Anaky, both older than Limerick, may have been. Ibrahima and Isabella had three children of their own within ten years—Simon, Prince, and another son whose name is not known.143 In later years he also had four daughters. Foster knew that Ibrahima had a superior education and placed him second-in-command on his plantation. He was also allowed to exercise his religion, probably because Foster knew the importance of education in Islam. Mississippi Poet Caroline Thayer described Ibrahima as "a Mahometan, and has adhered strictly to the forms of his religion." Mississippi printer Andrew Marschalk also observed that Ibrahima "adhered strictly" to his religion.144 It was burdensome for him to keep up his studies.

> Anyway, Ibrahima had no access to pen and paper. He had no Qur'an. Years became decades, and he did not see a single Islamic text or piece of Arabic writing. To retain his own literacy he took to tracing Arabic characters in the sand when Thomas would call a rest during work....He learned to speak in halting phrases, omitting conjunctions, and saying "he" or "de" for "the." And never was there an effort made to teach him to read and write. Thomas often did business with illiterates, and neither his wife nor his mother could write her own name. The secret superioity that Ibrahima might have felt on this subject rang hollow in the rude atmosphere of the farm.145

No one recorded if anyone compelled Ibrahima to alter his diet to include pork, since Foster did raise pigs on his plantation (there were cases where Muslims were able to retain their dietary restrictions). He and his wife were permitted to have a tiny garden and sell the produce in town, along with Spanish moss that they dried for moss mattresses. Due to the pass given to him by Foster, he could go to Natchez on Saturdays and Sundays. It was here that he could also converse with other Africans in his language of Fula, which many Africans could understand. It also afforded him and others the opportunity to receive messages from home through the litte-known slave trade grapevine. Years after being enslaved he finally received a message from home.

143. Ibid., 54-55. 144. Ibid., 57. 145. Ibid., 58.

"Abduhl Rahahman [Ibrahima]!" the man cried at seeing him, dropping his face to earth.

It was a tribute of respect to Ibrahima, done out of habit, though then wildly out of place. The person is identified only as "a Negro from [Ibrahima's] father's dominions." Possibly he was a Jalunke who had been sold or stolen from the country.146

Ibrahima found out that his father died peacefully in bed shortly after his capture and that his brother Saadu crowned himself the fourth almaami. Saadu ruled for seven years. He was a very pious person but a rival led a coup whose participants knifed him to death and dispatched his followers. Perhaps Ibrahima would have been assassinted if he was still residing in Timbo.147

Ibrahima never became absorbed into either the mainstream American or the slave cultures. He seemed an eccentric character to those in both spheres. Though whites looked at him merely as being Black, he felt himself superior to both his Christian counterparts. His people, the Fulbe, did not cut their hair and after his was sheared, he neglected it. He had little time to attend to the personal cleanliness rituals for which his group was recognized, particularly after his hand became callused. That and his enslavement "ate into his health, spirit, and self respect."

He remained a model of probity, hard-working and dependable at whatever he gave his attention. He never drank, he never cursed, he was never caught in a falsehood or dishonest act. He meant to survive, and he did, but the personal price was staggering. A man who knew him intimately for two decades said that—despite the passage of the respect of his owner—in all the time he had known Ibrahima, he had never seen his smile.148

An extraordinary coincidence occurred that allowed Ibrahima's return to Africa. With the assistance of the printer Marschalk, Mississippi U.S. Senator Thomas B. Reed, secretary of state Henry Clay, and President Adams, the plight of Ibrahima became a cause celebre.

...As the Prince was selling sweet potatoes in Washington D.C. (the seat of Slavery) he met the Doctor Cox who had been his old acquaintance in Africa, and an inmate of his dwelling at Timbo; and who immediately recognized him. The Dr., in the fullness of his gratitude to the Prince, went to Col. Foster, and offered him one thousand dollars as a ransom for the Prince; but Foster valued him so highly for the salutary influence he exerted over the slaves, that he rejected this

146. Ibid., 60-61. 147. Ibid., 61-62.
148. Ibid., 64-65.

proposal. But such entreaties were made by a son of Dr. Cox, and others, that Col. Rahahman and his wife received their freedom in the spring of 1828.149

Ibrahima himself told the story of re-meeting Dr. Cox. It differs slightly from the previous version and expands upon it. For instance, the encounter in Ibrahima's account, recorded in 1828, took place in Natchez, not Washington.

When I had been there [Natchez] sixteen years, Dr. Cox removed to Natchez, and one day I met him in the street. I said to a man who came with me from Africa, Sambo, that man rides like a white man I saw in my country. See when he comes by; if he opens but one eye, that is the same man. When he came up, hating to stop him without reason, I said master, you want to buy some potatoes? He asked, what potatoes have you? While he looked at the potatoes I observed him carefully, and knew him, but he did not know me. He said boy, where did you come from? I said from Col. F's [Foster]. He said, he did not raise you. Then he said, you came from Timbo? I answered, yes, sir. He said, your name Abdul Rahahman? I said, yes, sir. Then springing from his horse, he embraced me, and inquired how I came to this country? Then he said, dash down your potatoes and come to my house. I said I could not, but must take the potatoes home. He rode quickly, and called a negro woman to take the potatoes from my head. Then he sent for Gov. W., to come and see me. When Gov. W. came, Dr. Cox said, I have been to this boy's father's house, and they treated me as kindly as my own parents. He told the Gov., if any money would purchase me, he would buy me, and send me home. The next morning he inquired how much would purshase me, but my master was unwilling to sell me. He offered large sums for me, but they were refused. Then he said to master, if you cannot part with him, use him well. After Dr. Cox died, his son offered a great price for me.150

Henry Clay's letter of January 12, 1828, revealed the extent of interest in Ibrahima's situation. The government wanted to transport him to Liberia, a place Ibrahima had visited as a young man and that was near his own homeland. The American Colonization Society, the organization attempting to rid the United States of free Blacks, was also cooperating. Clay wrote the following:

The President is obliged by your attention to the subject of the Moorish slave, now in possession of Mr. Thomas Foster. The object of the President being to restore Prince, the slave mentioned, to his family and country for the purpose of making favorable impressions in behalf of the United States, there is no difficulty in acceding to the conditions presented by Mr. Foster, which I understand to be, that Prince shall not be permitted to enjoy his liberty in this country, but be sent to his own free from expense to Mr. Foster, who is pleased to ask nothing for the manumission of Prince on these conditions.151

149. Lewis, Light and Truth, 139-140.

150. Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 686.

151. Alford, *Prince Among Slaves*, 106-107.

Thomas Foster released Ibrahima from slavery and for the first time in decades, he had no master. Immediately an issue arose—what was to become of his wife who by that time had borne him nine children? A committee of five, including the famous abolitionist Arthur Tappan, later secured his family's freedom.152

One significant Black man of the era met with Ibrahima several times. He was John Russwurm, son of a white planter and a Black woman, and one of the first Blacks to receive a college degree (1826). He was also editor of the famous Black newspaper, *Freedom's Journal*. He spent hours with Ibrahima and listened to him pray, becoming more pan-African in his view of the world. Russwurm opposed the plans of the American Colonization Society, which was also supported by Southern money, but contact with Ibrahima began to powerfully affect him. Russwurm was becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the status of Blacks in the United States and after listening and learning from Ibrahima, considered emigrating to Africa himself.

> "I consider it a waste of words to talk of enjoying citizenship in the United States," he would write that winter. "It is utterly impossible in the nature of things. All therefore, who pant for this, must cast their eyes elsewhere."153

Friends of Ibrahima in late 1828 implored him to leave the United States as soon as possible. The new President and former slave trader, Andrew Jackson, would soon be inaugurated and there were doubts he would be able to leave the United States. His fame stirred up much negative concern in the Natchez area, unwittingly challenging the pro-slavery position. After a five month absence from Philadelphia due to touring, he returned to his wife. One January 1, 1829, he joined Philadelphia Blacks in their annual New Year's Day parade and in the Wesley Church, both places as an honored guest. Ibrahima and Isabella boarded the steamboat *Virginia* that set sail on January 21, embarking upon their voyage to Africa. They transferred to the *Harriet,* a vessel chartered by the American Colonization Society, carrying freedmen among its 150 passengers. On February 9, she set sail to Africa. On board was a free Black named J.J. Roberts who would become the first President of the Liberian Republic.154 They arrived at Monrovia, a town of 80 to 100 homes, on March 18. Coast fever attacked Ibrahima but he seemed to recover. Many of the passengers and crew of the

152. Ibid., 108, 164.
153. Ibid., 167-168.

Harriet became ill and died. In a letter to New York Ibrahima warned John Russwurm, whose health was never very good, that he should avoid Liberia or "he will certainly be a dead man." Finding that another brother was then ruler, Ibrahima prepared to return to his home after the May and June rains were over. In late June he contracted diarrhea that sapped his strength and appetite. He knew he would die soon and attended to some last requests. Ibrahima died on July 6, 1829. He was so close to home but never reached it.[155]

> The old man never returned to Futa. Unlike the familiar Moses of his Qur'an, he never even saw the long-sought land from a mountain. But if he never regained his home, it must be said that there was a part of it he never lost, a part that he had carried away with him and, somehow, despite a life of degradation, had managed to bring back intact.[156]

Famous British geologist Sir Charles Lyell, on his pre-1845 visit to the Hopeton plantation on St. Simon's Island, Georgia, met "old Tom," aka "African Tom." Tom, a good friend of Bu Allah, was the head driver for the plantation as well as a Muslim. His children and grandchildren had converted to Christianity, as had many of the descendants of Muslim slaves.[157] Born a Massina Fulbe (Fulani), his give name was Salih Bilali (Sali-bul-Ali). In a letter probably written in the late 1830's, his master said that he read Arabic and was "a strict Mahometan [who] abstains from spirituous liquore, and keeps the various fasts, particularly that of thae Ramadan."[158]

Little is known about Salih except for a letter his master wrote and a few pages of reminiscences of Macina that James Hamilton Couper of Hopeton recorded. Couper was the son of St. Simon's Island patriarch John Couper, a friend of Thomas Spalding. Salih Bilali of Macina was born circa 1770 near Mopti on the Niger River. Captured when about 12 years old by slavers (possible Bambara), they took him to the Gold Coast. Passed from hand to hand, he was finally enslaved in the Bahamas. In 1800 Salih was enslaved on the Hopeton Plantation and by 1816 he was elevated to head driver.[159] British admiral

154. Ibid., 174-177.

155. Lewis, *Light and Truth*, 140-141.

156. Alford, *Prince Among Slaves*, 179-183.

157. Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 46.

158. Ivor Wilks, "Salih Bilali of Massina," *in Africa Remembered: Narratives by West Africans from the Era of the Slave Trade*, ed. philip D. Curtin (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967), 145.

159. Ibid.

Cockburn offered Salih his freedom during the War of 1812 but he turned it down.

> But "African Tom" declined the offer, explaining that British masters would be the same as American ones, and only God is the true master.160

In his recollections he described the religious surroundings he remembered as a boy. Many Macina communities, like his, were Muslim while others were polytheistic. There were also communities that were in transformation, moving from polytheism towards Islam and embracing elements of both.

> The churches (mosques) are built of dried bricks, like the best houses. They contain a recess, towards the east or rising sun, towards which the *Al-Mami* turns his face, when he prays—towards Mecca.161

Later in his recollections he devoted a few lines to describe his people. When enumerating the livestock Salih pointedly noted that his people raised no hogs.

> The hair of the natives is curled and woolly; and both men and woman wear it in long plaits, extending down the sides of their heads. In war, they use shields and spears, but not bows and arrows. All the children are taught to read and write Arabic, by the priests(Maalims) [Mu alim]. They repeat from the Koran, and write on a board, which when filled, is washed off. There are no slaves. Crimes are punished by fines. The men work in the fields, fish. herd cattle, and weave. The women spin, and attend to household duties, but never work in the fields.162

The *Atlantic Monthly* published a portion of Nicholas Said's autobiograghy in its October 1867 issue. Nicholas served in a Black regiment during the Civil War and came to the attention of a writer both for listing "Africa" as his birthplace and for the tattoo on his face. Born in Bornoo (Bornu), one of the most powerful kingdoms of the Sudan, he stated that he didn't know English very well and the little he did grasp was through books written by the French. Nicholas also discoursed on his Islamic culture.

> These nations are strict Mohammedans, having been converted some two or three centuries ago by the Bedouin Arabs and those from Morocco, who, pushed by want of riches, came to Sudan to acquire them. Different languages are found in each nation, some written and some not; but the Arabic is very much in use among the higher class of people, as the Latin is used by the Catholic priests. Especially the Koran is written in Arabic, and in my country no one is allowed to handle the Sacred Book unless he can read it and explain its contents.163

---

160. Kly, "The African-American Minority," 153.

161. Wilks, "Salih Bilali of Masina," 159.

162. Ibid. 150.

163. Nicholas Said, "A Native of Bornoo," *The Atlantic Monthly* 20 (October 1867): 485.

Nicholas grew up in a prosperous and famous family but after the death of his father, he was taught literacy in his native tongue and in Arabic. At age thirteen, he was circumcised in a ceremony along with 300 other boys. Warned not to wander deep in one of the forests, he did so anyway. On a day during Ramadan while hunting with a group of his friends, Nicholas was captured by members of the Kindil tribe and enslaved.

> Out of forty boys, eighteen of us were taken captive. I wished then that it was a dream rather than a reality, and the warnings of my passed through my mind. Tears began to flow down my cheeks; I not only lamented for myself, but for those also whom I persuaded into those wild woods.164

After a long and arduous journey, Nicholas finally arrived in Tripoli where his newest master planned to take him to Alexandria on his first leg to Mecca. He reached Mecca but because he had not gone entirely on his own free will, was not permitted to go to the grave of he Prophet and could not use the title "Hadjj," or, "el-Hadj." After other sales he was enslaved in Saint Petersburg, lived in various European cities, and was finally manumitted by the prince who owned him. Having enough money to return to Africa, a white man persuaded Nicholas to sail with him to America. He toured not only the United States but also the Caribbean and Canada, where circumstances forced him to work.

After 1861 Nicholas traveled to Detroit where he taught at a Black school and in 1863, enlisted in a Black regiment for the Civil War. After being mustered out in the fall of 1865, he married and disappeared from history.165

Freedman Sancho Cooper related his life story to a friend before his death in 1875. Born in Africa in 1780 in the city of Cowbo, he was enslaved at age twelve. His father wanted him to become educated in England under the care of a Mr. Price and while at sea, "robbers" overtook the ship and enslaved him. He was taken to Jamaica where he remained for a year until being taken to South Carolina and sold to a Mr. Canada, a Roman Catholic. In his memoir, Cooper again demonstrated that some Africans were able to convert from Islam to Christianity. Although it may have been difficult for them, there were enough similarities between the two religions, at least in their minds, that they were able to make some connections. Cooper stated that he was raised to fear God, the "same God I now adore."

164. Ibid., 487-488. 165. Ibid., 488-495.

My father worship him before me. The name of God was Ala [Allah] and name of Christ was Mamudda [Mohammed], in my native language.166

Cooper revealed the process of his conversion to Christianity, an evolution that took many years. It would appear that his rebirth was complete. Not only did he gain a trusted position with a master, but he became completely caught up in Christianity.

...he [Dr. Booker] allowed me great privileges. He allowed [me] to sing praises and pray and hold meeting [s] in and through his yard, he also made me steward over his yard. I was made the principle purchaser of the necessaries of his yard not requiring any enumeration with me for monies spent. But under this great exaltation, I did not get proud but still kept my heart under subjection giving honor and praise unto his holy name that he caused me a lowly and poor African in a strange land to gain the confidence of my earthly master and supplanting my heart with that religion that masket wise the simple and is a friend to the friendless and the poor.167

Descendants of some Muslim slaves have passed on anecdotes about Muslim practices. Rosa Grant of Possum Point, Georgia, remembered her grandmother, a Muslim slave from Africa, and some of her Islamic rituals.

Huh membuh when I was a chile seein muh gran Ryan pray. Ebry mawnin at sun-up she kneel on duh flo in uh ruhm and bow obuh at tech uh head tuh duh flo tree time. Den she say a prayuh. I sohn membuh jis wut she say, but one wud she use tuh make us chillum laugh. I membuh it was "ashanegad." When she finish prayin she say "Ameen, ameen, ameen."168

Katie Brown lived on Sapelo Island, Georgia, and was a descendant of Muslim salve Belalil Mahomet. She too related some of her memories of her relatives' religious customs. She cited their use of prayer beads and specific times for prayer

...Belali an he wife Phoebe pray on duh bead. Dey wuz bery puhticuluh bout duh time dey pray and dey bery regluh bout duh hour. Wen duh sun come up, wen it straight obuh head an wen it set, das duh time dey pray. Dey bow tuh duh sun and hab lill mat tuh kneel on. Duh beads is on a long string. Belali he pull bead an he say, "Belambi,. Hakabara, Mahamadu." Phoebe she say, "Ameen, Ameen."169

Muhammad Kabe (alias Robert Pearl and Robert Tuffit) was a slave in Jamaica, born circa 1758 of Mandingo parentage in Bouka, Futa Djalon. His father's name was Abd al-Qadir, a wealthy man who

166. Archie Vernon Huff, Jr., The History of South Carolina in the Building of the Nation (Alester G. Furman III, 1991), 73; and Sancho Cooper, manuscript, to [friend, ca. 1879], Walker-Wrightman Papers, Methodist Church Archives, Sandor Teazel Library, Wofford Collage, Spartanburg, South Carolina.

167. Cooper, ibid. 168. Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 46. 169. Ibid.

owned 140 slaves, horses and cattle, and land that produced rice and cotton. He traded his products for those from Europe and elsewhere. His family was Muslim and probably his father and uncle, a famous lawyer, personally educated him. In 1878 robbers carried him to the coast and sold him into slavery. He eventually was enslaved at Spice Grove, Manchester Parish, Jamaica, and remained in that condition for 56 years of his life. He is known from an exchange of two letters between him and Abu Bakr al-Siddiq.[170]

Abu Bakr al-Siddiq was born in Timbuktu around 1790. One of the Shurfa groups to which he belonged in Western Sudan claimed descent from the Prophet. His life is known through autobiographical fragments published between 1836 and 1842, and a separate autobiographical manuscript dated by him in 1834. Dr. Charles H. Wesley of Howard University found the latter document in London, England, in the bottom of an old box at the office of the Anti-Slavery Society. Though Abu Bakr was enslaved in Jamaica, his life in Africa is one of the few stories that contain material about the life of an African Muslim written by an African Muslim. His experiences probably paralleled those of many Muslim Africans enslaved in the United States.

His education at Jenne, a famous agricultural and Islamic center in central Mali, included study of the Koran until age nine. Jenne lay 250 miles south of Timbuktu and Islam was and continues to be an important part of urban life. At the beginning of the 13th century when the 26th chief of Jenne proclaimed conversion to Islam, chronicler al-Sa di in the mid-1600's reported 4,200, Muslims present. Today it is a town of 12,000 inhabitants with 35 elementary schools where young students learn the Koran. There are also about a half-dozen secondary Islamic schools where students study law, grammar, rhetoric, literature, theology, the traditions of the Prophet, and Koranic exegesis. The education obtained by Abu Bakr probably resembled the education of Muslim youth seen there today.[171]

After a year of travel to cities of his relatives, Abu Bakr continued his education—advanced study of the Koran. At the beginning of the 19th century a revolution at least partly related to the clash of polytheism and Islam shook Western Sudan—between the Ashanti Muslim northern cities and the non-Muslims of the Ashanti kingdom.

---

170. Wilks, "Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq of Timbuktu," 163-164.

171. Geert Mommersteeg, "Learning the Word of God," *Aramco World* 42 (September-October 1991): 4.

One outcome of the turmoil was Abu Bakr's capture and enslavement. In 1805 he was sold to the English and sent to the West Indies. In two very similar autobiographical fragments he wrote about the experience of his capture.

...On that day they tore off my clothes, bound me with ropes, gave me a heavy load to carry, and led me to the town of Bonduku, and from there to the town of Kumasi, where the king of Ashanti reigned, whose name is Osei. From there through Akisuma and Ajumako, in the land of the Fanti, to the town of Lago, near the salt sea (all the way on foot, and well loaded).172

Abu Bakr continued his story of capture. For all that happened to him, he never lost his faith.

There they sold me to the Christians, and I was bought by a certain captain of a ship at that time. He sent me to a boat, and delivered me over to one of his sailors. The boat immediately pushed off, and I was carried on board of the ship. We continued on board ship, at sea, for three months, and then came on shore in the land of Jamaica. This was the beginning of slavery until this day. I tasted the bitterness of slavery from them, and its oppressiveness. But praise be to God, under whose power are all things. He does whatsoever he wills! No one can turn aside that which He has ordained, nor can anyone withhold that which He has given. As God Almighty himself has said: Nothing can befall us unless it be written for us (in his book)! He is our master; in God, therefore, let all the faithful put their trust!173

His first master, a stone mason named Donellan, sold him to a master named Haynes who baptized him Edward Donellan (sometimes spelled Donlan or Doulan). In 1823 Alexander Anderson purchased him as a storeman.

Abu kept the accounts in Arabic, since he had learned only to speak English, not to read or write it. In 1834, Anderson was persuaded to free Abu Bakr, through the exertions of Dr. R.R. Madden, a Special Magistrate in Jamaica concered with the supervision of the Emancipation Act of 1833. The inhabitants of Kingston donated £20 to Abu Bakr by public subscription.174

Dr. Madden wrote a letter to J.S.Buckingham, M.P., dated September 15, 1834. He told of a Negro brought before him to be sworn in as a constable on Anderson's property and discovered that he signed his name in Arabic. Madden found out his history and began to take an interest in him.

I had him in my house: he gave me a written statement of the leading events of his life....I soon discovered that his attainments, as an Arabic scholar, were the

172. Wilks, "Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq of Timbuktu," 163; and "Documents: The Life and History of Abou Bekir Sadiki, Alias Edward Doulan," *The Journal of Negro History* 21 (January 1936): 52.

173. Ibid.

174. Ibid., 152-155.

> least of his merits. I found him a person of excellent conduct, of great discernment and discretion. I think if I wanted advice on any important matter, in which it required extra prudence and a high sense of moral rectitude to qualify the possessor to give counsel, I would as soon have recourse to the advice of this poor Negro as any person I know.175

Dr. Madden was so taken with Abu Bakr that he decided he would discover a way to emancipate him. Madden decided to approach Anderson to see what steps he could take. Anderson decided he would take no money for Anderson, but would give him his liberty. Madden learned (1) how valuable Abu Bakr was as a slave and (2), there was an earlier attempt to free him.

> "I was given to understand by Mr. Anderson," says Dr. Madden, "that the man was invaluable to him—that he kept his books, (in Arabic characters) —and that the accounts of the whole of his vast business were kept by him—in short, that no sum of money which could be awared to him could compensate him for the loss of the man's services. I also heard, indirectly, that the attempt to procure his liberty had already been made, unsuccessfully, some years ago, by the Duke de Montebello, when he visited Jamaica.... But, though a Duke had failed, I had the modesty to think it was no reason why I should.176

Dr. Madden attempted to get Anderson to take at least some money for freeing Abu Bakr but he refused. When the day of manumission arrived, the special magistrate's office was filled with "respectable" citizens of Kingston, and "with persons of all complexions, who had come to witness the ceremony." Before the signing of the papers, the story of Abu Bakr's life was recounted and Anderson's generosity extolled.

> Beside the bench stood a Negro of exalted rank in his own country, in the act of obtaining his liberty, after many a long year of Slavery, and near him his venerable master, 'prepared to give unto his servant that which were just and equal, knowing that he also had a master in heaven.' There were tears of joy on some of the black features before me, and there were smiles of satisfaction even on white faces in the assemblage.177

In a letter from Kingston dated October 18, 1834, Abu Bakr responded to a short letter from Muhammad Kaba and signed "Robert Tuffit." Less than a page in length, Abu Bakr began by giving a short profile of his life. Then he asked Muhammad Kaba to keep him and his friends in his prayers.

---

175. Armistead, *A Tribute for the Negro*, 241-242.
176. Ibid., 243. 177. Ibid., 244.

I beseech you. Mahomed Caba. and all my friends. continue in praying for my friend. my life. and my breadfruit. which friend is my worthy Dr. Madden. and I hope that God may give him honor. greatness. and gladness. and likewise his generation to come. as long as Heaven and Earth stands....Dear countryman. I also beseech you to remember in your prayers my master Alexander Anderson. who gave me my liberty free and willingly: and may the Almighty prosper him. and protect him from all dangers.

Whenever you wish to send me a letter. write it in Arabic language: then I will understand it properly.178

At the end of his short autobiography Abu Bakr appealed to God to understand his straying from his faith and asked for forgiveness. This anguished cry has a universal resonance to all who have had their religion stripped from them, and who believe their soul to be in jeopardy for eternity.

My parents' religion is of the Mussulman, they are all circumcised and their devotions are five times a day, they fast in the month of Ramadan, they give tribute according to their laws, they are married to four wives but the fifth is an abomination to them, they fight for their religion, and they travel to Hedjaz (those that are capable). They don't eat any meat except what they themselves kill. They do not drink wine nor spirits as it is held an abomination so to do. They do not associate with any that worship idols, nor profane the Lord's name, nor do dishonour to their parents, or commit murder, or bear false witness, or who are covetous, proud or boastful for such faults are an abomination unto my religion. They are particularly careful in the education of their children and in their behaviour, but I am lost to all of these advantages since my bondage I am corrupt and I now conclude by begging the Almighty God to lead me into the faith that is proper for me for he alone knows the secrets of my heart and what I am in need of.179

178. Wilks, "Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq of Timbuktu," 165-166.

179. Mechal Sobel, Trabelin On: *The Slave Journey to an Afro-Baptist Faith* (Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, 1979), 32; and *The Journal of Negro History,* "Documents," 55.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adams, H.G.,ed. *God's Image in Ebony.* London: Partridge and Oakey, 1854.

Alford, Terry. *Prince Among Slaves.* New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977.

Arberry, Arthur J, trans. *The Koran Interpreted.* New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1955.

Armistead, Wilson. *A Tribute for the Negro.* Manchester, England: William Irwin, 1848.

Austin, Allan D. *African Muslims in Antebellum America*: A Sourcebook. New York: Garland Publishing, 1984.

"Autobiography of Omar ibn Said, Slave in North Carolina, 1831," *American Historical Review* 30 (July 1925): 787-795.

Bazán, Rafael Guevara. "Muslim Immigration to Spanish America." *The Muslim World* 56 (July 1966): 173-187.

______. "Some Notes for a History of the Relations Between Latin America, The Arabs and Islam," *The Muslim Wrold* 61 (October 1971): 284-292.

Bennett, Jr., Lerone. *Before the Mayflower*: A History of Black America. New York: Penguin Books, 1961.

Blanchard, Peter. *Slavery and Abolition in Early Republican Peru.* Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Books, 1992.

Blassingame, John W. *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.

______, ed. *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews, and Autobiographies.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977.

Bohannan, Paul and Philip Curtin. *Africa and Africans.* 3rd ed. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1988.

Bowser, Frederick P. *The African Slave in Colonial Peru,* 1524-1650. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1974.

Brandon, George. *Santeria from Africa to the New World*: The Dead Sell Memories. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993.

Cattcott, George H. "Omar Ibn Seid, A Slave Who Wrote an Autobiography in Arabic." *The Journal of Negro History* 39 (January 1954): 58-63.

Conniff, Michael L., and Thomas J. Davis. *Africans in the Americas: The History of the Black Diaspora.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994.

Cooper, Mary H. "Muslims in America: Background." *CQ Researcher* 3 (April 30, 1993): 369-370.

Cooper, Sancho. Manuscript, to [friend, ca. 1879]. Walker-Wrightman Papers, Methodist Church Archive, Sandor Teazler Library, Wofford College, Spartanburg, south Carolina.

Coulter, E. Merton. *Thomas Spalding of Sapelo.* University, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1940.

Creel, Margaret Washington. "*A Peculiar People*": Slave Religion and Community-Culture Among the Gullahs. New York: New York University Press, 1988.

"Documents: The Life and History of Abou Bekir Sadiki: Alisa Edward Doulan." *The Journal of Negro History* 21 (January 1936): 52-55.

Donnan, Elizabeth, ed. *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America,* vol. 2, The Eighteenth Century. Washington, DC: Carnegie Institute of Washington, 1931.

Dwight, Theodore. "Condition and Character of Negroes in Africa." *The Methodist Quarterly* 44 (Janyary 1864): 77-89.

Gilberto Freyre. *The Masters and the Slaves [Casa-Grande and Senzala]:* A Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization. Translated by Samuel Putnam. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963.

Genovese, Eugene D. *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979.

Ghayur, M. Arif. "Muslims in the United States: Settlers and Visitors." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 454 (March 1981): 150-163.

Grant, Douglas. *The Fortunate Slave.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1968.

Greenberg, Joseph H. "The Decipherment of the 'Ben-Ali Diary,' A Preliminary Statement." *The Journal of Negro History* 25 (July 1940): 372-375.

Gregoire, H. *An Enquiry Concerning the Intellectual and Moral Faculties, and Literature of Negroes.* Brooklyn, NY: Thomas Kirk, 1810.

Griffin, Edward D. A Plea for Africa. New York: Gould Printers, 1817.

Haddad, Yvonne Yazbeck, ed. *The Muslims of America.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Hall, Gwendolyn Midlo. *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Crele Culture in the Eighteenth Century.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992.

Harris, Joel Chandler. *The Story of Aaron (So Named) The Son Ben Ali.* Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1896.

Higginbotham, Jr., A. Leon. In the Matter of Color: *Race and The American Legal Process: The Colonial Period.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Hoberman, Barry. "The First Muezzin." *Aramco World* 34 (July-August 1983): 3.

Huff, Archie Vernon Jr. *The History of South Carolina in the Building of the Nation.* Alester G. Furman III, 1991.

Johnson, Roger A. "Inter-Religious Conflict and the Voyages of Columbus." *The Muslim World* 83 (January 1993): 1-17.

Kaba, Lansine. "Americans Discover Islam through the Balck Muslim Experience." *In Islam in North America*: A Sourcebook, eds. Michael A. Koszegi and J. Gordon Melton, 25-33. New York: Garland Publishing 1992.

Kaplan, Sidney, and Emma Nogrady Kaplan. *The Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution,* rev. ed. Amherst: The University of Massachsetts Press, 1989.

Katz, William Loren. Black Indians: *A Hidden Heritage.* New York: Atheneum, 1986.

Klein, Herberts S. *Slavery in the Americas: A Comparative Study of Virginia and Cuba.* Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1967.

Kly, Y. N. "The African-American Muslim Minority: 1776-1900." *Journal Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* 10 (January 1989): 152-160.

Lapidus, Ira A. A History of Islamic Societies. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Lewis, Robert Benjamin. *Light and Truth, From Ancient and Sacred History.* Portland, ME: D. C. Colesworthy, 1836.

Lincoln, C. Eric. "The Muslim Mission in the Context of American Social History," in *African American Religious Studies*: An Interdisciplinary Anthology, ed. Gayraud Wilmore, 340-356. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1989.

______. *Race, Religion, and the Continuing American Dilemma.* New York: Hill and Wang, 1984.

Lincoln, C. Eric, and Lawrence H. Mamiya. *The Balck Church in the*

African American Experience. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990.

Lupton, Kenneth. *Mungo Park the African Traveler*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.

Luxner, Larry. "Muslims in the Caribbean." *Aramco World* 38 (September-December 1987): 3-11.

Makdisi, Nadim, "The Moslems of American." *The Christian Century* 34 (August 1959): 969-971.

Marzal, Manuel. "Transplanted Spanish Catholicism." In *Soth and Meso-American Native Spirituality*: From the Cult of the Feathered Serpent to the Theology of Liberation, ed Gary H. Gossen, 140-169. New York: Crossroad, 1993.

Mazrui, Ali A. *The Africans: A Reader*. New York: Praeger, 1986.

Miller, Randall M, and Smith, John David, eds. Dictionary of Afro-American Slavery. New York: Greenwood Press, 1988.

Mommersteeg, Geert, "Learning the Word of God," *Aramco World* 42 (September-October 1991): 2-10.

Mott, A. *Biographical Sketches and Interesting Anecdotes of Persons of Color*. New York: Marlon Day, 1837.

Muhammad, Akbar. "Muslims in the United States: History, Religion, Politics and Ethnicity." *Journal Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* 12:2 (July 1991: 433-448.

Muhammad, Al-Hajj Wali Akbar. Muslims in Georgia: A Chronolgy and Oral History. Fayetteville, GA: The Brandon Institute, 1994.

Nunez, Benjamin. *Dictionary of Afro-American Civiliztion*. Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1980.

Owens, Colin A. *Slaves of the Mungo Park*. London, England: E.P.Dutton and Company, 1907.

Parrinder, Geoffery. *Religion in Africa*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1969.

Patterson, H. Orlando. "The General Causes of Jamaican Slave Revolts." *In Slavery in the New York World*, eds Laura Foner and Eugene D. Genovese. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1969.

Piersen, William D. *Black Legacy: America's Hidden Heritage*. Amherst: The Univeristy of Massachusetts Press, 1993.

Quarles, Benjamin. *The Negro in the Making of America*. New York: Collier Books, 1964.

Raboteau, Albert J. *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Rahman, Fazlur. *Islam*. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.

Reis, Joao Jose. *Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Unvirsity Press, 1993.

Rodney, Walter. "Upper Guinea and the Significance of the Origins of Africans Enslaved in the New World." *The Journal of Negro History* 54 (October 1969): 327-345.

Nicholas Said. "A Native of Bornoo." *The Atlantic Monthly* 20 (October 1867): 485-495.

Sobel, Mechal. Trabelin' On: *The Slave Journey to an Afro-Baptist Faith.* Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979.

Van Deburg, William L. *The Slave Drivers: Balck Agricultural Labor Supervisors in the Antebellum South* Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979.

Wilks, Ivor. "Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq of Timbuktu." *In Africa Remembered: Narratives by West Africans from the Era of the Slave* Trade, ed. Philip D. Cutin, 152-169. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967.

______. "Salih Bilali of Massina." In *Africa Remembered: Narratives by West Africans from the Era of the Slave Trade,* ed. Philip D. Curtin, 145-151. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967.

Wilmore, Gayraud S. *Black Religion and Black Radicalism.* C. Eric Lincoln Series on Black Religion. Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1922.

Winters, Clyde-Ahmad. "Afro-American Muslims—From Slavery to Freedom." *Islamic Studies* (): 187-203.

_______. "Islam in Early North and South America." *Al-Ittihad* 14 (July-October 1977): 57-67.

_______. Review of Roots, by Alex Haley. *Al-Ittihad* 8 (October/November 1976): 18-20.

_______. "A Survey of Islam and the African Diaspora." *Pan-African Journal* 8 (1975): 425-434.

Yusuf, Imtiyaz. "Islam in America: A Historical-Social Perspective," *Hamdard Islamicus* 4 (Winter 1989): 79-86.